The Great Concern:

OR, A

SERIOUS WARNING

To a Timely and Thorough

PREPARATION

FOR

DEATH:

With Helps and Directions in order thereunto.

By *EDWARD PEARSE.*

John 9. 4. *I must work the Works of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh when no Man can work.*

Recommended as proper to be given at FUNERALS.

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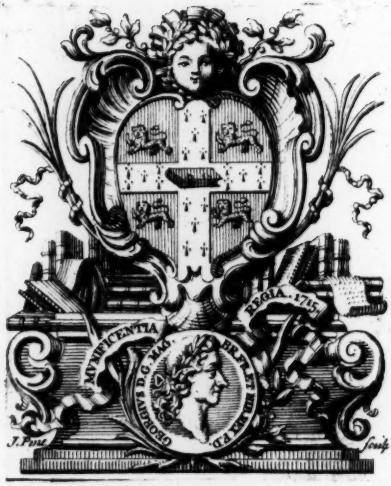

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To the READER.

READER,

IF thou art one, who indeed liveſt in the belief of a future Life, on Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, when time and days ſhall be no more, I am confident the enſuing Diſcourſe will be grateful and welcome to thee: I make no Apology for its plainneſs, nor am I at all ſolicitous touching the Cenſures I may fall under for publiſhing of it: If thou wilt read it with an upright Heart, I queſtion not but through a Bleſſing from above, it may do thy Soul good: Sure I am, thou wilt find the Argument moſt weighty, and the Concern thereof moſt important: And woe be to that Soul which miſſeth the deſign it tends to, and aims at. When Men come to die, and do find themſelves launching forth into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, at

leaſt when once they find themſelves incircled in that Ocean, (which quickly they do, when once Death makes its approach) then they ſee that their great Intereſt lay beyond this poor, vain, periſhing World, and the things thereof; then they ſee that their Great Concern *was to have look'd and liv'd beyond Time and Days, and have made proviſion for an Eternal State; but alas! alas! then 'tis too late: Then they cry out, O Eternity, Eternity! O miſerable Souls that we are! how did Sin and the World blind and bewitch us, that we could not e'er now, when 'tis too late, ſee the weight of an Eternal Intereſt! O blind and brutiſh Creatures, that were taken with carnal and ſenſual things, things pleaſing only to a ſenſual Appetite; and forgot God, the chief Good, the things of Heaven and a bleſſed Eternity, which would have made us happy for ever. Now to prevent theſe doleful* Lamentations, *and ſuch a diſmal and remedileſs*

dileſs Shipwrack of Eternal Souls, as alſo to ſhew them the path of Life, and to engage them to make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity, while Time and Days laſt, is the Deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe, and of the dying Author in it. And the Lord, the God of all Grace, proſper it in order thereunto. God has kept me for a full half a Year by the Graves ſide; one while lifting me up, then caſting me down, and now he ſeems to be ſpeedily finiſhing my days, to whom, through the infinite riches of free Grace, I can with ſome comfort and boldneſs ſay, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quicky, Amen. *And now farewel vain World, farewel Friends and Relations, farewel Eating and Drinking; and, bleſſed be God, farewel Sin and Sinning; within a few days I ſhall ſin no more, nor ever be in a poſſibility of ſinning, but ſhall be like my Lord, and ſhall ſee him as he is. And laſtly, farewel Reader.*

E. P.

A Propoſition for the more profitable Improvement of Burials, by giving of Books.

THat great Stupitidy that is in the generality of Mankind concerning their Mortality, does manifeſt the uſefulneſs of Books of this Subject: For although Men know, that, by reaſon of the firſt Tranſgreſſion, It is appointed for all Men once to die; *Though the Principles of this Natural Life (by which it is upheld) are ſo weak, that they cannot ſupport it long; though there are many internal Cauſes, that, as ſecret Mines, may ſom blow up Men, even of the ſtrongeſt Conſtitution; and many external Cauſes, as a Tile from a Houſe, or the ſtumbling of a Horſe, that may ſoon caſt Men into the Grave; tho there are continual Repreſentations and Spectacles of Mortality, in which Men, as in a Glaſs, may behold their Natural Face; and though Men always carry about them the Symptoms of Mortality, and the Marks of Death, yet they generally live as if they ſhould never die. In ſmall Villages, where inſtances of Mortality are very rare; there the inward thoughts of their Hearts ſeem to be,* that they and their Houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations. *In Populous Towns and Cities, there the commonneſs takes away the ſenſe of Mortality.*

And how ſad is it to behold the unſuitable carriage of the generality of Chriſtians at Funerals! Thoſe Opportunities are uſually ſpet in unprofitable Chat, in Mirth, in Eating and Drinking, and that ſometemes to exceſs: and thus the Houſe of Mourning is turned into the Houſe of Mirth and Feaſting.

To cure this evil Frame, we have thought good to propound that which we find to be the wiſh of the generality of Pious Perſons, viz.

viz. **That Books of this nature may be given at Burials,** *inſtead of* Rings, Gloves, Biskets, Wine, *&c. Reading and Meditation would be much more decent at ſuch ſad Solemnities, than Eating and Drinking, and putting on of Ornaments. Books of this Subject would make People mind the preſent inſtance of Mortality and affect them with ſuch devout Meditations as theſe,* Lord! this Tragedy that is now acting on our deceaſed Friend, muſt e'er long (*God knows how ſoon*) be acted on us all; our breath is ready to periſh; the Earth is gaping for us; yet a little while and we ſhall be carried down into the Chambers of Death. Lord! Teach us ſo to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto true ſaving Wiſdom. *No doubt, much good may redound to the Souls of Men this way; and God be thanked, we can teſtifie where it has been practiſed, People have been made more ſerious on ſuch ſad occaſions.*

If therefore, Reader, *thou art one of thoſe that deſires to mind thine own Concern, and to ſtir up others to a timely and thorough preparation for Death, we queſtion not but thou wilt approve of, and recommend to others this our* Propoſition: *In which, again, we aſſure thee (however ſome cenſorious Perſons, that take meaſures of us by their own narrow Spirits, may judg) we do not ſo much aim at our own private gain, as the publick of all good Chriſtians.*

If Chriſtians are ſo well minded, as to embrace this Propoſition, *we think fit to inſert the names of ſome Books proper for the purpoſe,* viz. *for the poorer ſort, Books of* 6d. *price.*

The Guide to Heaven.

Bury's Improvement of Death, *&c.*

A Propoſition, &c.

Books of 1 s. price.

Pearſe on Death.
Flavel's Token for Mourners.
Baxter's Now or Never.
Great Aſſize, &c.
Contemplatio Mortis.
Dr. *Bates* on Heaven.

Books of 1 *s.* 6*d.* and 2*s.*

Dr. *Bates* of Final Happineſs.
——His Treatiſe of Death and Judgment.
Dr. *Patrick*'s Heart-Eaſe. &c.
——His Divine Arithmetick.
Baxter on Death and Judgment.
Guide to Eternity.
Mirrour that flatters not.
Drexelius on Eternity.

For the Richer ſort, Books of 4. 5. 6 *s.* price, *viz.*

Drelincourt's Defence againſt the fear of Death.
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.
How's Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous; *with many others.*

We may ſay of a Book given at Funerals, what the Divine Herbert *ſays of a Verſe,* viz.

A Book may find him, who a Sermon flies,
And turn a Gift into a Sacrifice.

J. Robinſon.
B. Aylmer.

The Author hath alſo publiſhed two other ſmall Treatiſes, *viz.*

The beſt Match; or, the Souls Eſpouſal to Chriſt.
A Beam of Divine Glory: or, a Treatiſe of God's Unchangeableneſs.

THE

THE

Great Concern:

OR,

Preparation for *Death.*

Pſalm 39. 13.

O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence, and be no more.

CHAP. I.

Which contains an Introduction, and an Explication of the Words of the Text, with the general Truth of them, and therein the Foundation of our intended Diſcourſe.

TO walk with God here on Earth while we live; and to be ready to live with God for ever in Heaven when we come to die, is the great Work we have to do, the great Concern we have to mind, in our preſent Pilgrimage. To grow great and high in the World, to build

our Names and Families, to live a Life of ſenſual Pleaſures and Delights, ſpending our days in Mirth; theſe are low and mean, poor things; things infinitely beneath the dignity of a Soul, and altogether unworthy of the leaſt of its care and ſolicitude: But to know God, to love God, to obey God, to delight in God, to contemplate the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, to live upon God, and to live to God; upon him as our chief Good and Happineſs, and to him as our laſt end, and withall to be found ready at laſt to live with him for ever, to enter upon the Beatifical Viſion, and to paſs into that Life of Love and Holineſs, which the Saints and Angels live above, being made perfect in the Viſion and Fruition of the God of Glory; this is truly Noble, this is worthy of the care and ſolicitude of Souls. To promote theſe things, and more eſpecially the latter, is my deſign in fixing my Meditations upon this Scripture, which I am the rather induced to do, becauſe I am apprehenſive, that the time of my going hence, when I ſhall be ſeen no more, is drawing very nigh. The words are a holy and Prophetical wiſh and deſire, breathed out into the Boſom of God by the Man after his own Heart: And that when under ſore and heavy Afflictions; under grievous Sickneſſes, ſay ſome; under great Straits and Diſtreſſes, by reaſon of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion and Conſpiracy againſt him, ſay others. In this wiſh or deſire of his, you may note three things,

1. What

1. What that is which he wiſheth for, or deſires of God, and that is, ſparing Mercy, *O ſpare me.*

2. The End of this Wiſh or Deſire of his, and that is, the recovery of Strength: *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength.*

3. The Ground or Motive which induced him to make this deſire for this End, and that was the near approach of his Death, in theſe Words, *Before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* I will briefly Paraphraſe the Words for the opening of them, and then give you the Sum of them, as alſo my Intendment for them, in one general Poſition.

O ſpare me, that is, ceaſe to ſmite and afflict me, give me a little relaxation, a breathing time, ſo one expounds it: Deal gently and mildly with me, ſays another. Withdraw thy Hand a little from ſcourging me, and mitigate the violence of my Afflictions, ſay others, *That I may recover ſtrength*; that I may recruit my ſelf a little, ſaith one. That I may have a breathing-time before my Death, and being well compoſed, may lay down my Spirit, and commit it into thy Hand, ſay others. *That I may grow ſtrong in Grace and Holineſs*, ſay others, That I may finiſh my courſe, and fight a good Fight, obtaining

Ceſſa percutere & affligere, &c. Mol. *Leniter mecum age.* Mar. *Abſtute aliquantulum manus tuas a flagellando.* Menoch.

Ut reſpirem ante mortem, & tranquillus animam meam in manum tuam deponam. Mol.

taining the Victory through a happy Death, ſay others. The Sum is, That I may ſet things right in my Soul, and get into a more ready poſture for my Death and Diſſolution, which ſeems to be near at hand. *Before I go hence, and be no more*; that is, before I die, never more to return into this Life, before I quit this World, and bid adieu to this mortal Life, to be no more in the Land of the Living, to be no more in this World, to do any thing for God or my Soul: For (as one well obſerves) *David* doth not here ſuppoſe Death to be the utter end, or annihilation of Man, the putting of a Man out of Being: But his meaning is, if God did ſtill go on to afflict him, as he had done, he muſt ſuddenly die, ſuddenly go off the Stage of this World, and go down to the Bars of Death, to the Gates of the Grave: whereas to any thing that is to be done for God, or a Man's Soul, it is, as if he were out of Being; and where he will be kept for ever from returning any more to this Life, or any opportunity of ever doing any thing for another World. It is a Phraſe like to, and of the ſame importance with that, *Job* 16. 22. where *Job* ſpeaks of himſelf, *When a few Years are come, then ſhall I go the way, whence I ſhall not return: Not return*, that is, not any more to this Life: not return to do any thing for God or my Soul. The Sum of the whole

Antequam morior & hanc vitam nunquam reverſurus. Jun.

whole ſeems to be thus much; the good Man's Afflictions were ſo preſſing and heavy upon him that they did ever bow him down to the Grave; and he really looked upon himſelf as a dying Man, as one going down to the duſt of the Earth; where he knew full well, nothing was to be done for another Life, and from whence there was no return to this Life to be expected any more, and therefore he begs a breathing-time, a little ſpace wherein to recover himſelf out of all preſent Diſtempers, and Diſcompoſures of Heart, and to ſet all things right in the matter of his Soul; thereby fitting and preparing himſelf the better for his Departure out of this World: He begs a time of reſpit wherein to prepare himſelf and make ready for a dying hour. This is the Sum of what he drives at, and pleads with God for, according to the Obſervation, and therein the Sum of my Intendment ſhall be this.

Doct. *That 'tis a very deſirable thing, and a Buſineſs of the higheſt moment and importance to the Children of Men, to have all things ſet right, well-ordered, and compoſed in the Matters of their Souls, before they leave this World; to get all the Spiritual Concerns of their Souls into the beſt poſture they can, before a Dying Hour comes.*

David an holy Man, a Man in Covenant with God, yea, *a Man after God's own Heart*, doth yet (you ſee) pray for ſparing Mercy, for

for a breathing-time, a time of reſpite here in this World before he goeth off the Stage: And why ſo? *That he might recover Strength*, that he might ſet things right in the matters of his Soul; that he might make himſelf more ready, and get his Spiritual Concerns into a better poſture for a dying hour; and this he looked at, and made out after, as that which was moſt deſirable, and of the higheſt importance to him, as indeed 'tis to all. You have a Scripture not unlike to this, *Job* 10. 20, 21. *Are not my days few? Ceaſe then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I ſhall not return, even to the Land of Darkneſs, and of the ſhadow of Death*: That I may take comfort a little, that I may recover a little, that I may have a breathing-time, that I may recover my ſelf, and gather up my Spirits: So I find the Phraſe expounded. He ſeems to deſire a breathing-time; the better to compoſe himſelf and the matters of his Soul for a dying Hour. And indeed, 'tis the concern of us all, to ſet all things right in our Souls, and to get into the readieſt poſture that poſſibly we can, againſt a dying Hour comes. I ſhall firſt briefly evince this Truth, and then make ſome practical Improvement of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Wherein is ſhewn the exceeding great weight of dying Work, and extream difficulty of a dying Hour, as the firſt Evidence of our Aſſertion.

DYing Work, my Beloved, is great Work, and a dying Hour is a difficult Hour; and therefore we had need have all things well ordered, and ready in the matters of our Souls againſt that Time, that Work, that Hour comes. I will lay the weight of Dying Work, and the difficulty of a Dying Hour before you in Four Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this, (That Death in it ſelf, and in its own nature, if we look no further) is a very terrible thing; and we had need have all things ſet right in our Souls, all things in order, when we come to encounter with it. The Philoſopher who look'd not beyond the natural notion of Death, called, it Πάντων τ φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον. *Ariſt.* the moſt terrible of all terrible things. And in *Job* 18. 14. The Holy Ghoſt himſelf calls it, *the King of Terrors*: *His Confidence* (ſpeaking of a wicked Man,) *ſhall bring him to the King of Terrors, i. e.* to Death, which is moſt formidable: Indeed 'tis therefore called the King of Terrors, becauſe it is the greateſt and ſtrongeſt Terror. And Death muſt needs be terrible in it ſelf.

1. Be-

1. Becauſe it deprives us of all our ſwee Comforts and Enjoyments here in this Worl and puts an eternal period to our fruition o them. Here we enjoy much good, man ſtreams which run pleaſantly on each Han of us, (it may be) but when Death comes that deprives us of all. *Naked came I int the World, and naked ſhall I return*, Job 1. 21 So the Apoſtle, *We brought nothing into thi World, and it is certain we ſhall carry nothin out*, ſpeaking as to our outward Comfort here, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. The *Pſalmiſt* to the ſame effect, *Pſal.* 49. 17. ſpeaks of a rich Man; *He ſhall carry nothing away, His Glory* (ſaith he) *ſhall not deſcend after him.* Death, as one obſerves, is the greateſt Leveller in the World, it levels Scepters and Plow-ſhares, it makes the Prince as poor as the Peaſant.

2. Becauſe it diſſolves the Union between the Soul and the Body: Death is indeed the rending of Body and Soul, (thoſe old and loving Companions) aſunder. Now all Diſunions (as a worthy Divine obſerves) are uncomfortable, and ſome Diſunions are terrible: And, as ſome Diſunions are terrible, ſo thoſe are of all others moſt terrible, that do rend them from us which are moſt dear to us. Now what Union ſo near, as that between the Soul and Body? and therefore what Diſunion ſo terrible, as the diſſolution of this Union? The diſſolving the Union between a a Man and his Wife is terrible; becauſe they are nearly united each to other; but the diſſolving the Union between Soul and Body is more

more terrible; becauſe the Union is more near and cloſe. A Man and his Wife *are one Fleſh*; but the Soul and Body make but one Perſon; now Death diſſolves this Union. While we live, the Soul dwells in the Body, informs the Body, acts in and by the Body: it hath a great influence upon, and is greatly influenced by the Body: but when Death comes, then the Soul and Body part, till the Reſurrection; *one returning to the Duſt whence it came, the other to God who gave it*, Eccleſ. 12. 7.

3. It is the deſtroying and demoliſhing of the Body of Man, that famous and curious Fabrick, and a bringing it into Duſt and Putrefaction, *Pſal.* 90. 3. It turns a living Body into a dead Carcaſe, a lifeleſs Lump of Clay, and cauſeth it to become Meat for Worms to feed on, *Job* 19. 26. The Body of Man is a very curious piece of Workmanſhip, ſuch as wherein the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God is much ſeen and manifeſted, *Pſal.* 139. 14, 15. But when Death comes, it marrs and demoliſhes all, ſtains all its Beauty, and draws a Veil upon all its Glory. Sickneſs often makes a Man's Beauty to *conſume away like a Moth*, as you have it, *Pſal.* 39. 11. But Death utterly defaces it, and draws a Veil upon it, that turns his Beauty into blackneſs and deformity. One of the Ancients ſtanding by *Cæſar*'s Tomb, wept, ſaying, Where is now the Beauty of *Cæſar*? What now is become of all his Magnificence? In a word, as Life is the ſweeteſt of all outward Mercies, ſo Death is the ſharpeſt of all outward Afflictions:

The

The pains of it are pains to a Proverb; the sorrows of it are sorrows to a Proverb: *The sorrows of Death compass me about*, Psal. 116. Now if Death be thus terrible in its self; the judg ye, whether we had not need to have all things ready, and in order when it comes.

Second Proposition is, That in a dying Hour, the Devil is most fierce and terrible in his assaults and temptations upon the Soul. The Devil is in the Scripture called a *Roaring Lion*; and is usually most so against the poor People of God, when they come to die: *Then he hath Wrath, because he knows his time is short*. To allude to that, *Rev.* 12. 12. When a Man or Woman comes to die, the Devil knows he has but a short time to tempt, to vex, to terrifie that Soul; and therefore then usually he exercises great Wrath; then he stirs up all his Wrath, all his Malice, all his Cruelty against him; he see this is the last cast he is like to have for it, the last onset he is ever like to make upon the Soul's Faith and Comfort, and that now the Battel is to be won or lost for ever; therefore now he roars and rages terribly indeed, now he discharges all his Murdering Pieces against the Soul, to make Batteries, if possible, upon the Soul's Fort of Salvation, and to shake its Foundation of Life and Happiness. The Devil is the Enemy of Souls, *Mal.* 13. 25. and his Enmity works especially one of these two ways; Either, first, to keep them from Life and Happiness; and here he acts rather like an Angel of Light, than a Roaring Lion: He works

works rather in a way of Flattery, then in a way of Terror. Hence we read of his *Wiles*, *Methods*, *Devices*, and the like; his cunning fallacious Workings, thereby to deſtroy Souls. Or, Secondly, to trouble and torment Souls in their way to Life and Happineſs: And here he is indeed like a Roaring Lion, and never more than when we come to die. There are among others two Seaſons, wherein the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon the Soul. The firſt is, when a Man is going from Sin to Grace, when he is fully reſolved to cloſe with Chriſt, to ſhake off the Yoke of Sin, and to take upon him the Yoke of *Jeſus*. The ſecond is, When a Man is going from Grace to Glory; when he is going off the Stage of Time to Eternity; when a Man begins to live the Spiritual Life, and when a Man comes to die the Natural Death. I know, firſt, That as for his own Children, he uſually lets them alone, when they come to die: He is afraid to have them diſturbed; though ſometimes he cannot forbear, but torments them before their time. Secondly, God can, and ſometimes does chain him up, ſo that he ſhall not be able to trouble and torment the Saints in their paſſage out of this World: Yet ſtill, I ſay, for the moſt part he does fiercely aſſault them then; and doubtleſs, there are but very few of the Children of God, but do meet with very ſore aſſaults from Satan when they come to die; then he turns Accuſer; then he charges the Soul with all its Sins; then he tells him, he is an Hypocrite,

Hypocrite, that all his profeſſion hath be nothing but a deluſion, and the like. No is Satan thus fierce and terrible in his aſſau upon the Soul in a dying Hour? Surely th we had need have all ready againſt that Ho comes.

3. The Third Propoſition is this; Th in a dying Hour Conſcience is moſt awake ed; and ſo moſt quick and ſmart in Threats and Charges againſt the Soul, if a be not right within; and therefore we h need have all ſo in that Hour. There a three Seaſons in which Conſcience is moſt wake in the Soul. Firſt, when God begi to deal with the Soul in order to Life an Salvation: Then God lets Conſcience loo upon a Man. Hence we read of them, tha they *were pricked at their Heart*, in the ſen of Sin; the word is, they were pricked throug and through, *Acts* 2. 37. And ſaith *Paul*, *Whe Sin revived, I died*, Rom. 7. 9. That is, in the ſight of my Sin, which was wrought in me by the Law of God, I was made to ſee my ſelf loſt and miſerable, and awakened out of my Security. Secondly, When the Soul is under ſome ſmart and notable Affliction from the Hand of God: This is evident in that inſtance of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, whoſe Conſciences were awakened when they were in diſtreſs, and charged them with the guilt of their Sin in ſelling their Brother, *Gen.* 42. 21. Thirdly, When a Man comes to die, when the Viſions of Death and the Grave are before him. Oh! you little think how ſtrict Conſcience will be

in its ſearch, how ſharp in its charge, and ow ſevere in its cenſure in a dying Hour: hen if there be but the leaſt frown in God's ace towards the Soul, the leaſt flaw in his eace, the leaſt blot or blur in his Evidences r Heaven; if there be but the leaſt ſtain pon the Spirit, the leaſt Sin unpardoned, repented of, it is a Thouſand to one but onſcience will take notice of it, and charge e Soul with it. O Sirs, you will find a eat deal of difference between Conſcience pon a Bed of Eaſe, and Conſcience upon a ck-bed; between Conſcience in an hour of ealth and Worldly Proſperity, and Conence in a Dying Hour: In the one, great ings bear but little weight; but in the oer, little things uſually bear great weight Conſcience: Then the Language of Conience to the Soul is, Theſe and theſe things aſt thou done; thus and thus things ſtand ith thee; at beſt, Grace is thus and thus eak, Corruption thus and thus ſtrong, emptation thus and thus prevalent, the eart thus and thus out of frame, the Spirit us and thus alienated from God, and the ke: Hence 'tis that at Death there are ſuch onfeſſions as you have ſometimes from Men nd Women, that now they will ſend for me Godly Miniſter or Chriſtian to pray ith them and for them; though perhaps ey could not endure Prayer all their Lifeime before. Now if in a dying-hour, Conience be thus quick and ſmart in its threats nd charges againſt the Soul; then ſurely

we

we had need, and 'tis plainly our concernbly
to have all ready, and in order, against that
Hour comes. ie,

The Fourth Propoſition is this, That in
Dying Hour we ſhall have to do with God
in a very ſtupendious and amazing way
in ſuch a way as may well ſtartle and affright
us to think of it: We are ſaid *to have to do*
with God here, Heb. 4. 13. We have here to do
with God in Duties, in Ordinances, in Mer-
cies, in Afflictions: Indeed we had as good
never have to do with theſe, unleſs we have
to do with God in theſe: But though we
have to do with God here while we live, yet
know, we ſhall have to do with God in an
ther-gueſs way when we come to die; i
ſuch a way as may well ovewhelm us
think of it. I ſhall give it you in three ſteps.
Then we have to do with God immediate-
ly; with God immediately as our Judg, with
God immediately as our Judg for Eternity
And O how loud do theſe things call upon
to get all in order in the matters of our
Souls againſt a dying Hour comes!

1. When a Man comes to die, he has to
do with God immediately; and that is a
aſtoniſhing thing. In *Death* the Body crumbles
to Duſt; but *the Soul returneth to God who*
gave it: So the Holy Ghoſt tells us *Eccles.*
12. 7. The Body which came from the Duſt
crumbles to Duſt again; But the Soul, that
goeth into God's immediate preſence, to deal
and to treat with him as it were Face to Face;
the Soul is always with God, and cannot poſ-
ſibly

certainly be out of his Preſence, *Pſal.* 139.7. And that here the Holy Ghoſt tells us, when we die, the Soul returns to God; intimating that then the Soul goes into the immediate Preſence of God, and has more immediately to do with him, than here he was ever wont to converſe; then he beholds his Naked Majeſty and Glory. Now what an aſtoniſhing thing to do this? You will find (if you obſerve) that even Saints of God, yea, the holieſt of them, when they have dealt with God in a more immediate way than ordinary, they have been overwhelmed by it: Take for an Inſtance *Daniel*, who, upon receiving Viſions from God, tells us, *There remained no ſtrength in him: That his Comlineſs was turned into Corruption*, Dan. 10. 8. I might inſtance alſo in *John*, who upon a view of, and converſe with Chriſt, that was a little more immediate than ordinary, *Fell down at his Feet as dead*, Rev. 1. 17. Alſo that of *Jacob*, *I have ſeen the Lord Face to Face, and yet my Life is preſerved*, (ſays he) intimating it was a wonder that he could ſo immediately ſee God and live, *Gen.* 32. 10. Now if we are to deal thus with God immediately when we come to die, how had need have all in order before a dying hour comes.

2. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judg; as one that is to try him for his Life; to paſs Sentence upon his Soul; to determine his ſtate in Righteouſneſs, meaſuring our Life or Death, Happineſs or Vengeance to him in the other World:

World: And is not this an aſtoniſhing and a amazing thing? *Then* (ſaith *Solomon*, ſpeaking of Death) *ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit return to God who gave it* Eccleſ. 12. 7. At Death the Spirit returns to God; but it is to God, as a Judg, to determine his future Condition for him. *We muſt all ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, and every one muſt give an account of himſelf to God:* So the Scripture tells us *Rom.* 10. 12. And *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. When a Man comes to die, that which is immediately before him, is the Judgment of God; the ſtrict the righteous, the Impartial Judgment of God then away goes the Soul into the immediate Preſence of God, as ſitting upon the Throne of Judgment, to paſs a Sentence of Life or Death Salvation or Damnation, upon him: And (believe it) we had need to have all things ſet right and well ordered in our Souls, when we come thus to deal with him: We had need have all things well ordered, and ſet right in the matters of our Souls, when we come to deal with God but as ſitting upon a Throne of Grace but much more, when we come to deal with him as ſitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to conclude and determine our future Condition what it ſhall be. Judgment is an aſtoniſhing and terrifying thing; *the hearing of it made* Felix *tremble*, or (as the word is) it turned him into Terror or Affrightment, *Acts* 24. 25. And the Apoſtle calls it, *the Terror of the Lord* 2 Cor. 5. 11. Now when a Man comes to die

die, then he ſays, or may ſay, Now I am to deal with the Great God, the Judge of all; Now I muſt appear before his righteous Tribunal, and have the ſtate of my Soul determined for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation in the other World. O how great a thing is this!

3. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judge for Eternity: and this ſpeaks it yet more terrifying and aſtoniſhing: For though a Man is then to deal with God immediately, and that as his Judge too; yet if it were but for a time, for ſome ſhort Term of Years, it would not be altogether ſuch a terrifying and amazing thing: but alas! it is for Eternity, and therefore his Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. Hence *Auſtin* ſpeaking of Death, calls it *Oſtium Æternitatis*, the Gate of Eternity, *i. e*, The Gate or Door that lets Men out into Eternity; an Eternity of Life or *Death*, Salvation or Damnation; the Sentence which God will then paſs upon the Soul, will be an eternal Sentence; and the Soul muſt be eternally under the execution of it, whether it be for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation. When a Man comes to die, he then ſees himſelf launching forth into the great Ocean of Eternity; he ſees his Eternal All to be immediately at ſtake, and his eternal ſtate to be immediately determined by the Great and Holy God: Now he ſees he muſt ſhoot the Great Gulf, and take up his Abode in the Eternal Region: This fills him with Amazement. O now, ſays he, a Sentence muſt paſs upon me

once for all; now I must shoot the Great Gulf; now I must launch forth into the great Ocean, where neither Bounds nor Bottom is to be found for ever: Now I must enter upon Eternal Joys, or Eternal Flames; an endless Life either with God or Devils, in Heaven or Hell: Now I shall find Infiniteness and Eternity combine to do their utmost, to make me happy, or miserable for ever: Now I must become the immediate Object either of infinite Wrath, or infinite Love, infinite Hatred, or infinite Delight, and that for ever. Now I must hear from God, either, *Come thou blessed*, or *Depart thou cursed*, and that for ever: And O what an astonishing thing is this! O Eternity, Eternity! O vast Eternity! O great Eternity! O boundless Eternity! One serious view of it is enough to amaze a poor Soul looking upon it at a distance: But how much more amazing must it needs be, when it shall be immediately before the Soul, and he feel he must enter upon it the next hour? O then it will be amazing indeed? astonishing indeed! This one thing, Eternity, puts infinite sweetness into Mercies; and infinite bitterness into Sufferings: The thoughts of this was that which did so much amaze that good Man, who sitting in a deep Muse a long time, and being asked the reason of it, was silent; and being asked again and again, at length broke out into these Words, *For ever, for ever, for ever, for ever*; and for near a quarter of an hour together spake nothing else: there telling them that asked him, that it was

though

thoughts of this ſame *for ever*, that ſo much amuſed him. And if you were more in the thoughts of the weight of Eternity, you would ſee it were an aſtoniſhing thing indeed: And this is that which makes dying-work ſuch a weighty work, and a dying hour ſuch a difficult hour. I will cloſe this Head, and with that, this Demonſtration, with a ſaying I have read in one of the Antients, *That is not to be accounted*, (ſays he) *an evil Death, which has had a good Life preceding it; nor doth any thing make Death terrible, but that which follows Death: Therefore they which muſt neceſſarily die, are not much to concern themſelves what falls out to cauſe Death, but whither by Death they are conſtrained to go, whither Death carries them.* It is a great Saying, and indeed 'tis no great matter when we die, or how we die, or what is the occaſion of our Death: But it is whither Death carries us, and where Death ſets us down; whether in a bleſſed or wretched Eternity; whether with God or Devils; in Heaven or Hell? Well then, if Death be thus terrible in its own nature; if in a dying hour the Devil be ſo fierce and terrible in his Aſſaults upon Souls; if Conſcience be ſo awakened and ſmart in its Charges and Accuſations; if then we muſt have to do with God immediately, and as our Judge, yea, as our Judge for Eternity, as one that will determine the Eternal Condition of our Souls, in unſpeakable Happineſs, or unſpeakable Miſery; then ſurely dying work is a great work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour: It then greatly concerns us to have all ready, and all in order

in the matters of our Souls, againſt the time thereof comes.

CHAP. III.

Which ſheweth the Glory, Sweetneſs and Bleſſedneſs of the attainment of having all things ſet right in the Matters of out Souls, before a dying hour comes, which will further evince the Truth aſſerted.

AS Dying Work is weighty Work, and Dying Hour is a difficult Hour; ſo to have all things ſet right, all well ordered and compoſed in the matters of our Souls, againſt ſuch an Hour comes, is an high, a ſweet, and bleſſed Attainment, an Attainment which carries infinite Sweetneſs and Deſirableneſs in it. A taſte of which I ſhall give you in two things only. (1.) Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over Death and the Grave. (2.) Hereby we come to have abundant entrance miniſtred to us into Heaven and Glory. And, my Beloved, what more ſweet and deſirable than this? Surely this ſpeaks it to be a very ſweet and bleſſed Attainment.

1. Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over Death and the Grave. Death is an Enemy, 'tis the laſt Enemy Children of God have to grapple and conflict with; *The laſt Enemy that is to be deſtroyed is Death.* 1 Cor. 15. 26. And being the laſt Enemy, in conquering this, they conquer all; conquering

this, they are compleat and eternal Conquerors. Now by having all things ſet right in the matters of our Souls, all things ready, and in order for a dying hour, we come to conquer this laſt Enemy; yea, to get a glorious conqueſt over it; Hereby *Death comes to be ſwallowed up in Victory*, as you have the expreſſion, 1 Cor. 15. 54. Hereby *we are more than Conquerors over it*, Rom. 8. 37. Take the Conqueſt which this gives us over *Death*, in theſe three things.

1. Hereby the Soul is carried above the fear of *Death*: In *Heb.* 2. 15. we read of ſome, *who all their Life time were ſubject to bondage through fear of Death*: And if in their Life-time, much more when they come to a dying-hour; Then Conſcience (as you have heard) is more awake: O the Fears, the Terrors, the Hell upon Earth, that the ſight of *Death*'s approach fills many a poor ſoul with! But now take a Soul that has all things right, and in order in his Spiritual Concerns, and he is carryed above the fear of this King of Terrors! and that when made as terrible as the Wit and Malice of Man can poſſibly make it: He can converſe with his laſt Enemy as one that hath loſt his Sting and Power, and ſo without the leaſt fear or diſmayedneſs of Spirit: *None of theſe things moves me*, ſays *Paul*; *neither count I my Life dear unto my ſelf, that I may finiſh my courſe with joy.* His Afflictions did not move him, did not terrifie him. But if Death ſhould come, what then? Why that ſhall be welcome too, ſaith he, *Acts* 20. 24.

Who is afraid of a conquered Enemy, an Enemy which a Man ſeeth dead and ſlain in the Field? One that has all things ready for a dying hour, he ſees Death to be a conquered Enemy, an Enemy conquered by the Death of Chriſt; and ſo is carried above the fear of it.

2. Hereby the Soul is enabled in a holy manner to triumph over Death, and even to ſcorn and contemn it; which is an higher Conqueſt ſtill. A Man that has all things ſet right, and well ordered in the matters of his Soul, he is not only carried above the fear of Death, but he rides in triumph over it, as one that divideth the Spoil: He can then, with boldneſs and comfort, challenge this laſt Enemy of his, and even dare it to do his worſt to him: *O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave where is thy Victory?* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) *The ſting of Death is Sin, the ſtrength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. As if he ſhould ſay, Death you talk of a Sting; but where is it? Grave, you would threaten us with Victory and Overthrow; but do your work, conquer us if you can. As a Man that has diſarmed his Enemy, thrown him upon his back, and ſays to him, O Sir, where is your Sword? Where is your Piſtol? Where is the Execution you threatened? Do your worſt.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be able ſolemnly to chuſe and deſire Death; yea, very much to exult, and rejoyce in Death, as that which of an Enemy is become a Friend, and an Inl

into all Happineſs to him. So 2 *Cor.* 5. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who hath alſo given unto us the earneſt of his Spirit: Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whiiſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord; we are confident,* I ſay, *and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* So *Phil.* 1. 22, 23. *But if I live in the Fleſh, this is the Fruit of my Labour; yet what I ſhall chuſe, I wot not; for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

Mark, He deſires *Death*, he chuſes *Death*, as that which is a Friend to him, and an Inlet into his Happineſs. Such an one can ſay, as I have read a *German* Divine did, when dying; *I am ready* (ſays he) *and deſire to be gone out of this Life, in which all things are not only full of Miſeries and Calamities; but which is to be lamented, all things are full fraught with Sins: I ſay, I deſire to paſs into that Life in which there is no Sin, no Miſery.* Yea, more, ſuch an one can exult, and rejoyce in Death, Luke 2. 29, 30. *Lord, now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.* They are words of joy and exultation in the ſight of *Death*'s approach. The Child of ſome tender and indulgent Father, being abroad at ſojourn, and ſeeing a Meſſenger come from his Father to fetch him home; how does he exult and rejoyce? O (ſays he) my Father hath ſent for me home! Now I muſt go live with my Father, to eat and drink

at my Father's Table, to live in my Father's
preſence, enjoy my Father's Love and Coun-
ſels! And this he rejoyces in, and exultingly em-
braces the Meſſenger. 'Tis the very caſe here:
the Soul having all things ready, all things
right within, when Death comes, 'tis but as a
Meſſenger to him, to fetch him home to his
Father's Houſe, which he can welcome and
embrace with joy. O (ſays he) my Father
has ſent for me home, home to Heaven, there
to live immediately in his Preſence, and upon
his Fulneſs; and now ſhall I be for ever with
my Father; now I ſhall for ever feaſt my Soul
with my Father's Love, and the conſtant view
of my Father's Face: Now I ſhall *ſee him*
Face to Face, whom here I could never *ſee but*
through a Glaſs darkly: Now I ſhall ſee and be
for ever in the embraces of my ſweet Lord
that bled for me, that died for me, that *trod the*
Winepreſs alone for me; now ſhall I enter into the
Glorious Liberty of the Children of God: I have
hitherto been in bondage to Satan, in bon-
dage to my own Heart, which has all along
wretchedly impoſed upon me; but now I ſhall
enter upon the Glorious Liberty of the Children
of God: Now I ſhall *partake of the Inheritance*
of the Saints in Light: Now I ſhall bathe my
Soul in the Chriſtal Streams of undefiled Plea-
ſures, running freſh along the Banks of Eterni-
ty at my Father's right Hand: Now I ſhall
ſpend a whole Eternity in Praiſes, Doxologies
and Hallelujah's to God and the Lamb: Now
I ſhall have all my Spots and Wrinkles, my
Sins and Sorrows done away at once: Now

ſhall

ther' shall I sigh no more, and, which is infinitely
Coun better, I shall sin no more for ever; no more
y em complain of dark Visions, and short visits from
here God; no more complain of distances and alie-
gs se nation between Him and my Soul for ever:
t as There shall be no more interruption of Com-
to hi munion with my sweet Saviour; but I shall
an stand in his Presence, and behold his Face for
Fathe evermore. In a word, hereby Death, the
ther King of Terrors, becomes the King of Com-
upon forts to the Soul; and a Man comes to die
with both happily and comfortably. Some Men die
Soul neither happily nor comfortably; and such is the
view case of all that die out of Christ; they die in
him their Sins; they die to be damned for ever.
e bu Some die happily, but not comfortably; such
nd by is the case of poor Christians dying under defer-
Lor tion, whose Sun sets in a Cloud; they die in
od th the dark, not knowing what shall become of
to th their Souls to Eternity, which yet go safe to
hav Heaven, being built upon the Rock of Ages,
bon the Lord Jesus Christ. Some die both happi-
alon y and comfortably; such is the case of all
I shal hose who have all things set right between God
ldren and them, all things ready, and in order, be-
tan fore a dying hour comes. Some die presumptu-
e m ously, thinking all is right and well in the mat-
Plea ers of their Souls, when indeed nothing is so;
tern hat is sad for Eternity: The Lord deliver your
shal uls and mine from such an *Exit*. Some die
ogies remblingly or doubtingly, not knowing how
Now hings are with them, whether well or ill, but they
m ear ill, that is sad, at least for a time. The Lord
Now arry us above such an *Exit*. Some (*viz.* well or-
shall

dered Souls) die fiducially, knowing things t
be right between God and them; and that i
comfortable both for Time and Eternity
Well then, if hereby we come to have ſuch
glorious Victory over Death and the Grav
it muſt then be a great Attainment to have a
things in order between God and us, and conſ
quently greatly our concern to have thing
ſo.

2. Hereby we come to have a rich and gl
rious entrance miniſtred to us into everlaſtin
Life and Glory, into Heaven and Bleſſedne
As hereby we come to be glorious Conquero
over the natural Death: ſo hereby we com
to have a rich and glorious Entrance miniſtre
to us into the Eternal Life. Which alſo ca
ries much ſweetneſs and bleſſedneſs in it
2 Pet. 1. 5, 11. *And beſides this, giving all di
gence, add to your Faith Vertue, and to Vert
Knowledge*, &c. That is, grow as compleat
Grace as poſſibly you can, make ſure of yo
Salvation, make all ready in the matters
your Souls: and what then? *So an entran
ſhall be miniſtred to you abundantly into the Eve
laſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſ
Chriſt.* And is not this a bleſſed Attainment
Take this in three things.

1. Hereby the Soul comes to enjoy much
Heaven here upon Earth; much of Bleſſedne
and Glory, whilſt on this ſide Bleſſedneſs an
Glory; then hath a Man an abundant entran
miniſtred unto him into Heaven and Glor
when he hath much of Heaven and Glory gi
ven out to him here on Earth, large Earneſt, an

First-fruit

First-fruits: And this the Soul has, that hath all things right in the matters of his ſpiritual ſtate, all things ready and in order within. Hence we read ſometimes of the *Earneſt*, ſometimes of the *Firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 28. And the Soul that is moſt ready, has the greateſt Earneſt and Firſt-fruits; that is to ſay, the greateſt beginnings of Heaven here upon Earth: For that which makes us ready for a dying-hour, is ſomething of Heaven dropped into the Soul here.

2. Hereby he comes to go triumphantly from Earth to Heaven, to go to Heaven and Glory, with a Crown upon his Head; and is not this a ſweet Attainment? Then hath a Man an abundant entrance into Heaven and Glory, when he goes triumphantly thither: When a Man paſſes to Heaven and Glory, with Viſions thereof in his Eye, and Prelibations thereof in his Soul, with a clear Witneſs and Evidence in his Spirit that he is going to poſſeſs the fulneſs thereof with God and Chriſt for ever: When a Man enters into Life without any Rebukes from God, or his own Conſcience; without any ſtumbling through doubting or unbelief: This is the happineſs of ſuch as have all things well in their Souls before a dying hour comes. It is with ſuch in death, as it was with *John* in a Viſion, *Rev.* 4. 1. They (as it were) hear a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *Come up hither*, and immediately they are in the Spirit. Some poor Souls crowd into Heaven through a throng of doubts and unbelief, difficulties and deſpondencies, through many fears and temptations

tations; inſomuch that it might be truly ſaid of them, that they are *ſcarcely ſaved*, as the Apoſtle's expreſſion is; but others go through none of theſe; they go triumphingly, with a Crown upon their Heads, as it were. So *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his Appearing.* Methinks I ſee how his Holy Soul went triumphantly to the Throne of God, and the Lamb. When *David and the Houſe of Iſrael, brought up the Ark of the Lord, it was with ſhouting, and with the ſound of the Trumpet*; So when ſuch a Soul goes to Reſt, 'tis with a kind of ſhouting and triumph among the Saints themſelves, who all reach the ſame Heaven and Glory at laſt. There's a very great deal of difference in their Death and in their going to that Heaven and Glory. As you know, two Ships may arrive at the ſame Harbour, yet with much difference, as to the manner of their coming in: The one makes a ſhift to get in, but 'tis with her Anchors loſt, her Sails torn and rent, her Flags down, her Maſts broken, and the like: But the other comes in bravely, riding as it were in Triumph, with her Sails ſpread, her Anchors ſafe, her Flags flying, her Trumpets ſounding, and her Marriners ſhouting. So great a difference there is in the paſſing of Saints

to Heaven and Bleſſedneſs: Now what an Attainment muſt it be to go with Shouting and Triumph!

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Bleſſedneſs and Glory with God for ever. Then has a Man an abundant Entrance into Heaven and Glory. when he is admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Glory and Bleſſedneſs in Heaven for ever; and this he hath who hath all right and ready in the Concerns of his Soul when he comes to die: ſuch an one receives a full Reward, as the Expreſſion is, 2 *Epiſ. John* 8. and *has much fruit abounding to his account*, Phil. 4. 7. And O what a ſweet and bleſſed Attainment does this ſpeak it to be, to have all in order againſt a Dying Hour comes! Now if it be ſuch an Attainment to have things ſet right, and in order in our Souls againſt a Dying Hour, then ſurely it muſt needs be highly our Concern to have all things ſo.

CHAP. IV

Which ſhews the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, as a further evidence of our Aſſertion.

AS to have all things ready, and in order when a Dying Hour comes, is an high and glorious Attainment; ſo ſuch is the ſtate and condition of Men and Women under death, that

that it cannot but be highly their concern t
have all things ſet right, all things ready i
the matters of their Souls, when they com
to die. This I will ſet before you in Thre
Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this, *That ſuch is th
ſtate and condition of Men and Women unde
Death, that there is no return for them into thi
Life any more for ever.* When once a Man'
Sun is ſet, it never riſes more; when once
Man has his *Exit*, is gone off the Stage o
this World, he nevers enters more; there i
no more any Part to be Acted here by him
This you have in the Text: *Before I go hence
and be no more*; that is, no more in this
World. So *Job* 7. 7, 8, 9, 10. *O remember
that my Life is Wind, my Eye ſhall no more ſe
Good: The Eye of him that hath ſeen me, ſhall ſe
me no more: Thine Eyes are upon me, and I am
not. As the Cloud is conſumed and vaniſheth a
way; ſo he that goeth down to the Grave, ſhall com
up no more. He ſhall return no more to his Houſe
and his Place ſhall know him no more.*

Again, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few
Ceaſe then, and let me alone, that I may take com-
fort a little; before I go whence I ſhall not return
even into the Land of Darkneſs and the ſhadow o
Death.* And again, Job 16. 22. *When a few
Days are come, then ſhall I go the way whence I
ſhall not return.* All ſhewing that when a Man
is once gone off the Stage of this World, there
is no return for him any more.

Second

Second Propoſition is this; *That ſuch is the State of Men and Women under Death, that there is nothing to be done for their Souls: There is nothing to be mended that is amiſs, nothing to be ſet in order that ſhall be found out of order.* Death (my Beloved) is not the time of working, but of receiving the reward of our work: Death leaves us under an utter and eternal impoſſibility of ever doing any thing for another World; Therefore *whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do,* (ſaith *Solomon*) *do it with all thy might; for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave whither thou goeſt,* Eccleſ. 9. 10. And *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is to Day; becauſe the Night cometh, when no Man can work,* ſaith Chriſt, *John* 9. 4. Death is a ſtate of darkneſs, and deprives us of all helps, advantages and opportunities of ever doing any thing for the good of our Souls: There is no repenting, no believing, no turning to God in the Grave. There is no aſſuring pardon of Sin, no getting an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; no making our Calling and Election ſure there: O no! Theſe things muſt be done now, or they can never be done; and if they be never done, our Souls are for ever undone. 'Twas an Epicurean ſaying of him, who ſaid, *Eat, Drink, Play; for after Death there is no pleaſure:* But it would be a Chriſtian ſaying, to ſay to you, and my own Soul, Love God, pray to him, ſeek his Face, repent, believe, make ſure of Chriſt; for after Death none of theſe are to be done: They muſt be done here, or never,

Third

Third Propoſition is this, *That ſuch is the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, that the Soul is actually and irreverſibly ſtated and concluded in its Eternal Condition: The Souls Eternal State is abſolutely fixed and unchangeably determined, without any alteration for ever.* 'Tis an Obſervation among the Schoolmen, that look what befel the Angels that ſinned, that in Death befalls wicked Men, thoſe that are not ready for a dying hour. The Angels immediately upon their ſinning, were ſtated in an irreverſible condition of Wo and Miſery: And wicked Men, unready Souls, immediately upon Death, are irreverſibly ſtated in a like eternal Condition; they are eternally ſealed up under Damnation. And the Devils may as ſoon get out of thoſe Chains of Eternal Darkneſs, whereinto they are caſt, and in which they are locked up, being reſerved unto Judgment; as ſuch Perſons can change or reverſe that Condition. The truth is, Death whenever, or where-ever it comes, is as a determining thing, it concludes the Soul for ever under an unalterable ſtate of Life or Death, of Happineſs or Miſery; for, *as the Tree falls, ſo it lies*, Eccl. 11. 3. Hence in Death, *the Spirit, the* Soul is ſaid *to return to God*, Eccleſ. 12. 7. Upon which a Learned Man has this Obſervation; *God* (ſaith he) *receives the Soul of Man, when he dies, to himſelf: and having received it, he delivers it either to the Holy Angels, that by them it might be carried to Heaven, if it hath been holy and good; or he delivers it to the evil Angels, by them to be dragged into Hell, if it hath been*

been ungodly. Hence the Apoſtle tells us, *after Death comes Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. By which is meant the particular Judgment of every Man and Woman immediately upon Death; which is nothing elſe but the ſtating of the Soul in an Eternal Condition. Hence alſo, when *Dives* is brought in, deſiring that *Lazarus* might *dip the tip of his Finger in Water to cool his Tongue*; an ſwer is made, That it cannot be, for as much as there is no going for any, either from Hell to Heaven, or from Heaven to Hell, becauſe *there is a Gulf fixed*, Luk. 16. 26. Noteing the unalterableneſs of that ſtate which Death ſets Men down in, whether of Happineſs, or Miſery. Well then, if ſuch be the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, as we have heard, then ſurely 'tis highly our concernment to have all ready, all in order againſt a dying hour comes. Having given you thus briefly the Demonſtrations of the Point, I ſhall make ſome Practical Improvement of it.

CHAP. V.

Wherein Sinners are convinced of their Sin and Folly in their neglect of this Concern: With ſix weighty Pleas or Arguments, to ſet home this Conviction, and awaken them to their Work.

AND is this indeed a Concern of ſo much weight and moment to us? Then how great is their Folly, and what Enemies are they

they to their own Souls, who live in the neglect of this great Buſineſs and Concern (which the moſt of Men do.) God is pleaſed to ſpare, yea, wonderfully to ſpare them Days, for Weeks, for Months, for Years together, and that for this very end that they ſhould make themſelves ready, and ſet all right in the matters of their Souls, againſt a dying hour comes: But, woe and alas for them! This they mind not, this they concern not themſelves about, but inconſiderately live in total neglect thereof, than which what greater Folly can they be guilty of? Pray mind what God himſelf ſpeaks in this caſe, *Deut.* 32.28,29. Where he ſaith concerning Iſrael, *They were a Nation void of Counſel, nor was there any understanding in them.* And what then? *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this: that they would conſider their latter end.* Obſerve here two things atteſted and verified by God himſelf. (Firſt) That 'tis a point of the higheſt Wiſdom the Sons of Men are capable of, ſeriouſly to conſider their latter end; that is, to prepare for Death, and to ſet all things right in the matters of their Souls, ſo as that things may iſſue well with them at laſt, and they may go off the Stage of this World with Comfort. (Secondly) That not to do this is a point of the greateſt Folly: It doth evidently argue Men to be void of Counſel, and all true Underſtanding: It would have been their Wiſdom to have conſidered their latter end; and their not doing of it, argued them to be guilty of notorious Folly: Theſe things you may

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ce God himſelf atteſts and verifies here. And my Beloved, what greater Folly can there be, then for a Man to live in the neglect of that which is of ſo much weight and importance for him to mind, as this is? Surely the greater the concern is, the greater muſt our folly be in the neglect thereof: Yet this is the folly that the moſt of Men are guilty of; they mind not their latter end, their dying hour; at leaſt not ſo, as to make a timely proviſion for it. God letteth them live many years, and perhaps they rejoyce in them all; but they forget the days of darkneſs, which are many: They regard not the ſtate of their Souls, nor how things ſtand between God and them in reference to another World; And O that this were not the folly of too many of us, who profeſs the belief of another Life, a future ſtate: *We live and enjoy good, but we put far from us the evil day*, as thoſe are ſaid to do, *Amos* 6. 3. God ſpares us time after time, but no proviſion do we make for a dying hour. O how many of us have never yet ſet any thing right in the matters of our Souls, any thing in order againſt the time comes when we are to go hence, and be no more: that have ſcarce ever had yet one ſerious Thought of Death, Judgment, or Eternity, nor made the leaſt title of Proviſion for them? And what ſhall I ſay to ſuch? I would (if God ſaw good) awaken them out of their folly, and convince them of it: In order to which, I would plead a little with them in five or ſix Particulars.

1. Muſt we not all go hence? *Solomon* tells us,

us, *There is a time to be born, and a time to die* Eccleſ. 3. 2. And the one is as ſure as the other as ſure as we have had a time to be born, ſ ſure we ſhall have a time to die, and the Livin know it: *The Living know that they ſhall di* (ſaith *Solomon*) Eccleſ. 9. 5. Indeed they ma well know it: For not only the experience o between five and ſix thouſand years tell them ſo, but it is what is appointed, what is infallibl determined by the unchangeable Law, and De cree of Heaven, *Heb.* 9. 27. Nor can any thing whatever exempt us from the ſtroke of Death.

1. Youthful Strength and Vigour can't do it: For young Men die as well as old; ſtrong Men die as well as weak. *One dieth in his full ſtrenght*, (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) *being wholly at eaſe and quiet, his Breaſts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moiſtened with Marrow*, Job 21. 23, 24.

2. Worldly Pomp and Greatneſs can't do it: For Great Men die as well as Mean Men; Rich Men die as well as Poor Men. *Where is the Houſe of the Prince?* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt.) Anſwer is made, *He ſhall be brought to the Grave, and ſhall remain in the Tomb; the Clods of the Valley ſhall be ſweet unto him, and every Man ſhall draw after him, as there is innumerable before him*, Job 21. 28, 32, 33. So in the 49 Pſalm, 16, 17, 18, 19. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the Glory of his Houſe is increaſed: For when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him; though while he lived, he bleſſed his Soul,*

Soul, and the like, *he ſhall go to the Generation of his Fathers, he ſhall never ſee Light.*

3. Humane Wiſdom and Policy can't do it; for Wiſe Men die as well as Fools. So *Pſal.* 49. 10. *Wiſe Men die; likewiſe the Fool*; yea, in many reſpects, *Wiſe Men die as the Fool*, Eccleſ. 2. 16. Pray what is become of all the Wiſe Men and great Politicians that have lived in former Ages? Truly the Clods of the Valley cover them.

4. Spiritual Gifts and Graces can't do it; for good Men die as well as bad; holy Men as well as wicked Men: *The righteous Man periſheth, and no Man layeth it to heart; and merciful Men are taken away*, Iſa. 57. 1.

5. Eminency of Place and Service can't do it; *Your Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* Zech. 1. 5. What higher place, than to be a Propher, to be an Ambaſſador for God? and yet ſuch die: Nothing (you ſee) can exempt us from the ſtroke of Death: Why then ſhould we neglect to prepare for it! I will cloſe this Head with a Saying I have read in one of the Antients, *What among humane affairs*, ſays he, *is more certain than Death? What more uncertain than the hour of Death? Death compaſſionates not Poverty, neither doth it reverence greatneſs; it ſpares no Sex, no Manners, no Age, only it ſeems to come in at the Gate upon old Men; but craftily it ſteals in upon young ones.*

2. Doth not Death haſten upon us all? As we muſt all die, ſo Death haſtens apace upon us; every ſtep we take is a ſtep towards Death

Death and the Grave. So we find, *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. *Our whole Life is* (as one well obſerves upon that place) *nothing elſe but a journey toward Death and the Grave*; whether we ſleep or wake, eat or drink, trade or travel, pray or play, we are ſtill haſtening to the Grave: the dying hour haſtens upon all; and how faſt (pray) does it haſten upon us? faſter than the Weavers Shuttle does to the end of the Web. *My days* (ſaith Job) *are ſwifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, Job. 7.6. How faſt does it haſten upon us? As faſt, yea faſter then a Poſt haſtens to the end of his Stage, or a ſwift Ship to the Harbour, under the advantage of Wind and Tide, or the ſwift flying Eagle to the Prey. *My days are ſwifter than a Poſt* (ſaith Job) *they flee away, they ſee no good: they are paſſed away as the ſwift Ship; as the Eagle haſteneth to the Prey*, Job 9. 25, 26. How faſt does it haſten upon us? So faſt, as that for ought we know it will be upon us before we ſee the light of another day. *Thou fool, this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*, Luke 10. 20. How faſt does it haſten upon us; So faſt as that for ought we know, it may be upon us the next hour, yea, the next moment: *They ſpend their days in Mirth, and in a moment go down to the Grave*, Job 21. 13. To be ſure it will be upon us ſpeedily, and it may be upon us ſuddenly. I pray conſider, what are we? and what is our Life? Wind: Job 7. 7. *O remember that my Life is Wind*: An Hands-breadth, *Pſal.* 39. 5. *Behold thou haſt made my days as an Hands-breadth; mine Age is as nothing before thee.* And

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declining ſhadow, *Pſal.* 102. 11. *My days are like a ſhadow that declineth, and I am withered like Graſs.* A Flower of the field which is withered, and gone with the Wind: *As for Man, his days are as Graſs, as a Flower of the Field, the Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more*, Pſal. 103. 15, 16. And again, *All Fleſh is Graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the Flower of the Field, the Graſs withereth, the Flower fadeth; becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the People is Graſs*, Iſa. 40. 6, 7. Vanity and a ſhadow: *Man is like to vanity, his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away*, Pſal. 144. 4. *A Vapour which appeareth for a little ſeaſon, and is gone*, Jam. 4. 14. O how ſoon may one, or another, or all of us, be among the Dead; How ſoon may Death approach us?

3. What infinite Mercy is it, that God hath ſpared us thus long, and ſtill does ſpare us to ſet all things right, to make all ready for a dying hour? O my Brethren, how great is the ſparing Mercy of God towards us; We have had ſome ten, ſome twenty, ſome thirty, ſome forty, ſome fifty, ſome ſixty Years in the World, and ſtill God ſpares us; ſtill he lets us live and enjoy good: And why all this, think you? Surely to ſet all things right in our Souls, to make ready for a dying hour, and ſhall we yet neglect it? God forbid; O Sirs, think a little, I beſeech you with your ſelves, How long ſince the Grave might have ſwallowed us up, and the bottomleſs Pit have ſhut its Mouth upon us? How long ſince might Time

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and Days have been at an end with us, and o
Souls ſtated in a miſerable Eternity ? But ſ
God ſpares us, and we are yet in the Land
the Living, with a Door of Mercy and Gra
yet open unto us ; at leaſt a poſſibility left
of knowing the things of our Peace in our da
of making Proviſions for Death and Eternity
And O what Mercy is this ! I would fain
little quicken both you and my ſelf by this Co
ſideration: And in order thereunto let me ple
a little particularly with you.

1. Conſider how long God hath ſpared
and does ſpare you, beyond what he does a
has thouſands, and ten thouſands of others
God does not ſpare all at that rate, which h
has ſpared, and does ſtill ſpare us : Alas
How many thouſands are there now free
mong the Dead, who came into being lo
ſince we did ? Their Glaſs is run, their Su
is ſet, their Day is over, their Hopes and E
pectations are all at an end : Their Souls a
ſtated in an Eternal Condition, a Conditio
that will admit of neither change nor perio
for ever ; and yet we are ſpared ſtill : The
came into the World long after us, and a
gone into Eternity long before us : Yea, ho
many are there, that never arrived to the o
half of thoſe years that we have arrived u
to ? Their Sun hath ſet in the Morning
How many of us have out-lived our Yoke
fellows, our Children, our Servants, ou
Friends and Acquaintance ? And yet we ſtan
our ground ; and all this that we might pre
pare for a dying hour. *This Patience of G*

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ſhould lead us to Repentance, Rom. 2. 5. And O that it might ſo do!

2. Conſider how much we have provoked God, and what advantage we have given him in Juſtice againſt us: I would ſay here, as Chriſt ſpeaks in another caſe, *Luke* 13. 2. *Suppoſe ye that thoſe* Galileans *(whoſe Blood* Pilate *mingled with their Sacrifices) were Sinners above all the* Galileans, *becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh; Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower of* Shiloah *fell, and ſlew them; think ye they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem? *I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* So ſay I here, Suppoſe ye that thoſe that are gone down to the gates of the Grave, and the bars of Death, before us, were greater Sinners than we? I tell you, nay; *but except we repent we muſt all likewiſe periſh.* We have ſinned as well as they, and poſſibly in many regards more than they: To be ſure, we have all over and over deſerved long ſince to have been covered with the ſhadow of the Night of Eternal Darkneſs. O how hath the patience of God been tried, and his Long-ſuffering put to it by us! What burden have we been to his Soul! Some of us have cauſe to think, that we have been as great a burden to God, as moſt that ever lived. How juſtly may the bleſſed God complain of many of us, *That we have made him to ſerve with our Sins, and wearied him with our Iniquities*, as he did them of old; *Iſa.* 43. 24. *That we have broke his Heart*

with our whoriſh Heart, whereby we have depar-ed from him, Ezek. 6. 9. *That our Sins ha preſſed him down, as a Cart is preſſed that full of Sheaves*, Amos 2. 13. Alas, alas! Ho have we wallowed in our Pollutions, an acted out the Enmity and Rebellion of o natures againſt him? How have we rejecte his Word, reſiſted his Spirit, deſpiſed h Grace, trampled upon his Son, refuſed man and many an offer of Love, and many a ſwe Call, and a bleſſed Invitation, to come to th Marriage-ſupper of the Lamb? and yet th he ſhould ſtill ſpare us: O what Mercy is this In 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. We read, *That the long ſufferin of God waited in the days of* Noah: And truly my Beloved, it waits as much in our day and our Provocations be as many and as hig againſt him as theirs of that Generation wer O Sirs, why are we not in Hell? Why are w not ſealed and ſhut up among the Damned Why have we one Call more, one Offer mor one Seaſon of Grace more? Verily 'tis all ric Mercy: O that it might lead us to Repen tance!

3. Conſider how ſad it had been with u had the Lord taken that advantage againſt u which we have over and over given him. Sup poſe (my Beloved) God had not ſpared us but had cut us off, as he might long ſince what now had become of us? And where now had we been? Had we died of ſuch an ſuch a Sickneſs you have been in, when poſſi-bly a Sentence of Death was paſſed upon you both by your ſelf and others, and there wa really

really but a ſtep between Death and you, where and how miſerable had you now been? Had you not been now in the Flames, eternally ſeparated from God and Chriſt, being Godleſs and Chriſtleſs? Have you not now cauſe to fear you had been in as irrecoverable Condition as the Devils themſelves are in, ſealed up under Wrath and Condemnation, paſt all hopes and poſſibility of Mercy for ever? *Whither had I gone* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *if then* (ſpeaking of the time he was in his Sins) *I had gone hence? Whither had I gone but into the Flames, and into Eternal Torments, anſwerable to my Sins?* May not we ſay the like? But bleſſed be God, it is yet time and ſeaſon with me and you; we are ſpared to this hour, that we might provide for Death and Eternity. O Sirs, ſuppoſe you or I were now among the Damned; ſuppoſe we were as they are ſealed up under Wrath, and ſeparated from God, left under an utter impoſſibility of ever ſeeing his Face; How ſad then would our Condition be? Why, thus it might have been with us! O what Mercy is it then that God has ſpared us, and does ſpare us as he does? And how ſhould it awaken us to our Work?

4. Conſider, how much more ſad it may, and will yet be with us, in caſe we provide nor for a dying hour. Truly, the longer God ſpares us, if we anſwer not his end in his ſparing Mercy, the more miſerable ſhall we be for ever. It will be ſad to periſh at all; but it will be doubly ſad to periſh under the long-ſuffering of God, under the abuſe of much good-

neſs, and long patience: O to have many day and many years patience and goodneſs come i to witneſs againſt a Man at laſt: How ſad will this be; Think of, and ſeriouſly lay to heart that Scripture, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up to thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Every day which God in his patience affords us, if we be not led to Repentance, is a day of treaſuring up wrath, heaping up to our ſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, when wrath ſhall come upon us to the utmoſt. Well, think then what a Mercy it is, that God ſpares you as he does; and what an Obligation this ſparing Mercy of his is upon you, to ſet all things right in the matters of your Souls againſt a dying hour comes.

5. Are you ſure that thoſe helps and advantages which now you enjoy to further you in your work, will always laſt and be enjoyed by you? Suppoſe, my Beloved, that God ſhould yet ſpare you, and prolong your days in the Land of the Living: Yet, O how ſoon may all your Helps and Advantages to further you in this great work, be withdrawn from you! Now, bleſſed be God, you enjoy many bleſſed helps and advantages for your furtherance in this great work, but how quickly may they all be gone!

1. How ſoon may the Reproofs, the Counſels,

ſels, the holy Examples of your Godly Friends, Miniſters and Relations, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the loving Reproofs, the wholeſome Counſels, the holy Examples of ſuch and ſuch Friends and Relations; one reproves you for Sin, another quickens you to Duty: one dehorts you from the World and Carnal Pleaſures; another perſwades you to cloſe with Chriſt, and walk with God, to purſue after Heaven and Eternal Life; one wooes and beſeeches you, another charges and commands you to labour and know God, and to live to him, to provide for another Life, and they all ſhew you the path of Life, they tread the way to Heaven in your ſight: All which are great helps and advantages to further you in this great Concern of yours. But how ſoon may all theſe be withdrawn? Thy Friends, thy Miniſters, thy Relations will ſpeedily be lodged in the Duſt, and thou ſhalt never have a word of Reproof, a word of Counſel, a word of Quickening, a word of Encouragement, or a pattern of Faith and Holineſs ſet before thee, by them any more for ever; which would be a dreadful thing. Now the Godly Father, Mother, Yoke-fellow, Maſter, Friend, and Acquaintante, is plying thee with Counſels and Inſtructions, for the good of thy Soul; to Morrow it may be, he or ſhe goes down to the Gates of the Grave; and then no more of this for ever.

2. How ſoon may the Word and Ordinances of God, which you now enjoy, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the Word

and Ordinances of God: You go from Ordinance to Ordinance; you have *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*, as it is *Isa.* 28. 10, Yet let me tell you, *you see and hear these things which many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see and hear, but saw and heard them not*, Mat. 13. 16. O how is *Light and Immortality brought to light* to you! How is the way of Salvation made plain and manifest before you! What glorious Discoveries! What blessed Revelations! What sweet and frequent tenders of Christ are made to you! How freely are you *called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*! How lovingly doth Christ invite you to himself! How kindly does he stand knocking at the Door of your Souls! O (my Beloved) I may now say to you, as *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold! Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.* O what helps and advantages are these! But how soon may they all be gone? How soon may the Word of God be withdrawn? How soon may your Light be put out, and your Souls left in Darkness, not knowing whither to go? Remember that Word of Christ, and lay it to heart, *John* 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the Light with you, walk while you have the Light, lest Darkness come upon you; and he that walketh in Darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the Children of the Light.* It is a great question whether we may not lose Gospel-Ordinances and all; and where are we then?

3. How

3. How ſoon may the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God be withdrawn from you? Now you have the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God in you, and with you; *he moves upon the face of the Water* in your Souls; he moves and ſtrives in and by the Word and Ordinances, Mercies and Afflictions; now you have enlightning, and then you have quickning Influences from him: Now he ſhews you your Work, and then he tenders you his Aſſiſtance; now he diſcovers the odiouſneſs of Sin to you, and then he diſplays the Beauty, Sweetneſs, and Excellency of Chriſt and Holineſs before you: But alas! How ſoon may all this be at an end? Think of that terrible word, *Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.* God may poſſibly the next day, yea, the next hour, ſay to his Spirit concerning one or another of us, Let him alone, ſtrive no more with him, move no more in him, convince him no more, perſwade him no more, draw and allure him no more; he is addicted to his Luſts, and to this World, let him alone: he has no mind to Heaven, no deſire to make any proviſions for another World, let him alone; he is unwilling to ſee beyond Time to Eternity, he is given to his Carnal Pleaſures, let him alone; he has a reſiſting, gain-ſaying Spirit, let him alone. O how ſoon theſe, and all other helps and advantages you now enjoy, may be withdrawn, who knows? You have all theſe together in one Scripture, which I deſire you to lay to heart, Luke 19. 41, 42. *When he was come near, he beheld the*

City (ſpeaking of *Jeruſalem*) *and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* They had a day, wherein they did enjoy the things of their Peace; they might and ſhould have improved their Day, and the things of their Peace by ſecuring their Eternal State: But they neglected it, and now all theſe are withdrawn from them; which cauſed the Lord of Glory the Joy of the whole Earth, to weep over them ſo woful, miſerable, and deplorable he ſaw their condition to be: And how ſad will it be with you, if once Chriſt ſhould come to ſay over you that diſmal word, *Now they are hid from your Eyes!*

5. Is it an eaſie matter (think you) to ſet things right in your Souls, and to make all things ready for a dying hour? Suppoſe (my Beloved) that you ſhould live yet many days, and withal, your helps and advantages for the good of your Souls ſhall be continued to you: Yet, is it an eaſie work which you have to do? And ſhall you have time and days to ſpare? Believe it, Sirs, all will be little enough to ſet things right, to make things ready for a dying hour, Pray conſider with me theſe few things as to this.

1. Conſider in what a woful diſorder all things are at preſent with you, and how utterly unready for a dying hour: I will give you the Scripture-ſtate of your caſe; You are *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, under whole Loads and Mountains of Scarlet Crimſon Guilt; *without*

Chriſt

hriſt, without Hope, without God in the World, lienated, and Enemies in your Minds, by wick- l Works; yea, Enmity it ſelf againſt God nd Chriſt; full of ſin, both within and ithout, nothing but Sin, having no good welling in you; void of all Grace, all true iritual Life; under the power and predomi- ancy of Luſt; *ſerving divers Luſts and Plea- res, and carried captive by the Devil at his Will*: Cloſely glued to, and deeply in ve with this World; ignorant of God, and f the great Myſtery of the Father, and of hriſt; at leaſt having no ſaving knowledge of em; no ſavour of Heaven, no reliſh of ſpi- tual things in your Souls; wallowing in our Blood and Gore, being *filthy and abo- inable, to every good Work reprobate*; the eart ſtrongly averſe from God and all Good, nd vigorouſly bent to Sin and Vanity: No- ing of Heaven within; but full of Hell, full f the Spirit and Image of the Devil; under e Law of Sin, ſtrangers to the Law of Grace; o union with Chriſt, no Oil in the Veſſel; *or, miſerable, blind and naked*; at moſt, *having t the Form, and denying the Power of Godlineſs*. his is your Condition: O what Diſorders re theſe! And what an unready poſture are ou in for Death and Eternity!

2. Conſider how great a thing it is to be ady for Death, ready indeed, and to have l things ſet right, and in order, againſt a dy- g hour comes; and how much is requiſite order thereunto. 'Tis a great ſaying of an ly Man; *No one* (ſaith he) *can joyfully wel- me Death, but he that has been long compoſing*

his Spirit, and making ready for it. O my Beloved, to be indeed ready to quit the World to go into the Divine Preſence, the Great the Holy, the Glorious Preſence of God, to be ready to enter upon the Beatifical Viſion, to poſſeſs a Manſion in the Father's Houſe, to join with an Heavenly Hoſt of Angels, and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, in Eternal Praiſing, Admiring, and Adoring of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt: Believe it, this is a great thing, and great things are requiſite thereunto. This calls for a near Union with Chriſt, a firm Peace with God, clear Evidences for Heaven: for much Grace and Holineſs, much Heavenlineſs and Spirituality of Mind, much Weanedneſs from this World, much holy Deadneſs to Sin, Self, and the Creature, much Victory over Corruption: much Soul-cleanſing; much purity of Heart and Affection; much Diligence and Faithfulneſs in Duties. And (my Beloved) are theſe little things, or things eaſily to be accompliſhed and attained unto? O Sirs! the Scripture, ſpeaking of theſe things, calls upon us to *ſtrive*, Luke 13. 24. *to give all diligence* in the purſuit of them, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10. To manage and diſpatch *them with Fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. All which tells us, that they are great things, and not eaſie to be accompliſhed and attained unto: Therefore we had need look after this, and neglect no longer.

3. Conſider, what Lets and Hindrances, Difficulties, and Oppoſitions you muſt expect to meet withal in your minding and managing

this Work; not only is the Work it ſelf great, but you muſt alſo expect many Lets and Hindrances, much Difficulty and Oppoſition in the managing of it: You muſt expect Lets and Oppoſitions from the Devil, he is the Enemy of Souls: And you muſt expect that he will make uſe of all his Wiles, Methods, and Devices, all his Craft and Cunning, all his Artifices; and that he will ſtir up all his Wrath and Malice againſt you: He is your Enemy, and a ſubtile, potent, indefatigable Enemy, an Enemy *that always goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. You muſt expect Lets and Oppoſitions from the World too, from the Men of the World, from the Things of the World, from the Smiles of the World, from the Frowns of the World. The World is your Enemy as well as the Devil: So much is intimated, 1 *John* 5. 4. And you muſt expect oppoſition from it: The Men of the World will diſcourage you; the Things of the World will divert you; the Troubles of the World will mightily depreſs you; the Enjoyments of the World will miſerably enſnare and entangle you: The World is of a marvellous bewitching, enſnaring and entangling Nature: It is indeed oppoſite to God and all Goodneſs, and ſo to the whole Intereſt of our Souls. *The Friendſhip of the World is Enmity to God*, James 1. 4. The World will plead for, and take up your Time, your Strength, your Thoughts. O the hindrance that the World is to thouſands, and ten thouſands, in the Work in their Souls; truly this ruins multitudes for ever:

This

This ruin'd him we read of *Mat.* 19. 32. And ſaith *Paul*, Demas *hath forſaken us, having em-braced this preſent World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10.

You muſt expect Lets and Hindrances alſo from your own Hearts; yea, from them a-bove all others: *The Heart* (the Holy Ghoſt tells us) *is deceitful above all things, and deſpe-rately wicked*, &c. *Jer.* 17. 9. And who of us does at all obſerve it, and the workings of it, does not find it to be ſo? Now it will open-ly oppoſe you, then it will ſecretly ſeduce and enſnare you: Now it will carry you off, and draw you back from God and Duty, *Heb.* 3. 12. Then it will turn you aſide to Sin and Vanity, *Iſa.* 44. 20. Now it will divert you from Duty, then it will make you dead and ſlothful in Du-ty; 'Tis indeed wholly ſet againſt all that is good; and it hath a thouſand ways to hinder you in your great Work; and you muſt ex-pect that it will do its utmoſt to hinder you. This is a cloſe Enemy, it is always at hand; there is no end of its oppoſition, till Life it-ſelf ends. One of the Antients (I remember) breaks out into a ſad Exclamation againſt his own Heart, thus: *My Heart* (ſaith he) *is a wicked Heart, a vain Heart, a roving, a wandring Heart: My mind is exceeding light, wonderful inconſtant, a Vagabond, and a Fugitive, it changes it ſelf into all ſhapes; it will, and it will not; 'tis like a Leaf moved and carried a-bout with the Wind. My vain and importunate Heart hales me now to the Market, and then to Strifes and Bramlings; now to Feaſting, and then to impure Luſts; now the Fleſh is inflamed with*

ſordid

ſordid Titillations, then the Mind is defiled with filthy Cogitations. And who of us may not make the ſame complaint? Yea, ſuch is the Enmity and Oppoſition of our own Hearts againſt Heaven, and the things of Heaven, that many times when we moſt reſolve and ſet our ſelves to follow God, and to purſue the work of our Souls, then they ſet us moſt back. It was a great ſpeech of that ſame Father: *This* (ſays he) *is my daily exerciſe, with my whole ſtrength I bend to thee, and would mount up to God and Heaven, but by how much the more ſtrongly I endeavour to come up to thee, by ſo much the more powerfully I am caſt into the Earth, into my ſelf, and even under my ſelf, captivated to my Luſts.*

And ſo it is often with us: Lets then, and Oppoſitions muſt be expected by us on all hands; and we had need therefore the more to awaken to our Work. 'Tis true, if you will engage in good earneſt in the Work of your Souls, your Helps and Encouragements will be greater than your Lets and Diſcouragements; you will have more with you than againſt you: You will have God with you, and Chriſt with you, and the Comforter with you, and all the Graces of the Covenant with you; be encouraged therefore to ſet upon Soul-work. Now lay all theſe things together, and ſee if it be an eaſie matter to make ready for a dying hour; and if it be not, why ſhould we neglect? why ſhould we delay any longer?

6. How terrible will Death be to you! And what a dreadful change will it make with you

you, in caſe you ſtill neglect to make ready for it! Suppoſe (my Beloved) you go on in the neglect of this great Concern, *putting far from you the evil day*; What (think you) will the iſſue of it be; Will not Death be moſt terrible to you, when you ſhall be called to conflict with it? Will it not make a dreadful change with you? Surely it will. Death to an unready Soul, what will it be? It will be the period of all his Mercies, of all his Comforts, of all his Hopes: For ſuch an one receives all his Good Things in this Life, before Death comes, *Luke* 16. 25. It will be the ſending of him to his own Place, the cutting him down as Fewel for everlaſtingly Burnings: It will be (as a worthy Divine ſpeaks) *As the taking up of a draw-bridge, and the pulling down of the Flood-gates of God's Eternal Wrath, to let in the Deluge of it upon his Soul for ever*: It will be a change to him: but what Change will it be? ſurely a very ſad one.

1. A Change from Earth to Hell; And is not this a ſad Change? *The Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God*, Pſal. 19. 17. And we read of the *rich Man* (who was unready for Death) *that being dead he was in Hell*, Luke 22. 23.

2. A Change from Light to Darkneſs: And is not that a ſad Change? The Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking of ſuch an one, tells us, *God ſhall drive him out of the Light into Darkneſs, and chaſe him out of the World*, John 18. 18. Here wicked Men enjoy the Light of Creature-Comforts, but God will drive them out of theſe, into the Dark-

Darkneſs of Eternal Miſery, into *utter Darkneſs*, Mat. 25. 30. into *blackneſs of Darkneſs*, Jude 13.

3. A Change from Pleaſure to Pain, from Delight to Torment; a ſad Change it is, from Pleaſure and Delight in Sin, to Pain and Torment for Sin, *Luke* 16.23. Here the Soul ſports himſelf in the Pleaſures and Delights of Sin, and he thinks he can never have enough; but then there will be an end of all thoſe Pleaſures and Delights, and nothing but Pain, Torment, and Vexation will ſucceed them.

4. A Change from the Offers of Grace, to the Revelation of Wrath: *Shall thy loving kindneſs be declared in the Grave, or thy faithfulneſs in Deſtruction?* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) in that 88 *Pſal.* 11. True, in 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. we read of *Chriſt's preaching by the Spirit to the Spirits in Priſon*; that is, to Souls in Hell: But mark, when was it that he preached to them; Not when in Priſon, but in the days of *Noah*, when they lived in the World. There is never an offer of Grace and Love made to Souls in the Grave; while Life laſts, the Soul hears the joyful ſound; And O the ſweet Offers, the gracious Tenders, the loving Invitations that are made to him in Chriſt, of Grace, of eternal Life and Love! O the wooings, the meltings, the intreatings, the alluring of Divine Love to and over the Soul! But when Death comes, farewel all theſe; farewel all the ſweet Offers of Chriſt, and all the bleſſed motions of the Spirit; then there's nothing but Wrath revealed, and Wrath ſhall come

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come on the neglected Soul to the uttermost.

5. A Change from fair Probabilities to utter Impossibilities of Life and Salvation; a sad change still: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*; now, and not hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Now there is a fair probability for the worst of Sinners to be saved, if they will look after Salvation, and mind their eternal Concerns; Christ is both able and willing to save: To save was the end of his coming into the World, and of all he did and suffered here, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Now they are besought and entreated to be reconciled to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. but when Death comes, that changes these fair Probabilities into utter Impossibilities of Life and Salvation. Therefore mark: *Now* (saith the Apostle) *is the day of Salvation*; that is, now whilst Life lasts, and while the Gospel is preached.

6. A Change from Hope to Despair; a sad change indeed. We read, that *the Hope of the Hypocrite shall perish*, Job 8. 13. and that *the expectation of the Wicked shall perish*, Prov. 10. 28. Whether Men be open Sinners, or close Hypocrites, their hopes at last shall all fail, and turn to despair, despair of ever seeing God, or enjoying the least tittle or *iota* of Good for ever.

Thus Death will be terrible to you, and make a dreadful change with you, in case you neglect to make ready for its coming; 'twill affright you, as bad as the Hand-writting upon the Wall did that proud King, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6,

which

Which made his Countenance change, his thoughts to trouble him, and the Joynts of his Loins to be loosed, and his Knees to smite one against another. O when Death comes, and thou shalt be found unready, how will thy Countenance change, thy Joynts be loosned, thy Thoughts troubled, and thy Heart tremble within thee? In a word I will say to you, as the Prophet spake of old, *Isa.* 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of Visitation? and whither will you flee for help?* When Death comes, what will you do? Which way will you look? Will there be any hope, any help, any refuge for your Souls to flee unto? Alas! there will be none. Wilt thou then run to the Mercies of God, and cry, Lord, Lord? Alas! it will be in vain; he will then say unto you, *Depart from me I know you not*, Mat. 25. 11, 12. Wilt thou then labour to get Grace and Pardon? Alas! it will be too late; then the *Door will be shut* against thee, *Mat.* 25. 10. Wilt thou then desire others to spare thee some of their Oil? Alas! That will be a vain thing; they will tell thee, they have but enough for themselves, *Mat.* 25. 9. Wilt thou then plead thy Gifts, Parts, and Services for Christ? Alas! it will be to no purpose, unless thou hast done the main Work; notwithstanding all thy Gifts and Services, he will send thee away with the workers of Iniquity, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. Wilt thou call upon the Rocks and Mountains to cover thee, and hide thee from the wrath of Him that sits upon the Throne? Alas! it will be in vain, *Rev.* 6. *latter end.* O Sinner! When thou shalt

ſhalt ſee thy ſelf launching out into the gre
Ocean of Eternity; and God, ſhall as it we
ſay to thee, by the Mouth of thy own Conſ
ence: Well now, Time and Days are at
end with you, and will never dawn mor
what haſt thou done for thy Soul? What P
viſion haſt thou made for another World?
Chriſt thine? Haſt thou gotten thy Sins p
doned, and the like? When it ſhall be thus
ſay) what wilt thou then do, and whither w
thou then look? How wilt thou then cry o
Undone, undone, I am loſt for ever! My Day
ended, and my Work is ſtill to do! Wo is me,
a God, a Chriſt, a Heaven, a Bleſſedneſs, a Gl
have I wilfuly and fooliſhly loſt? Truly thou,
ſuch as thou, are the only Perſons whoſe De
will be truly lamentable. I remember a
ing I have read in one of the Antients; *Tha*
(ſaith he) *are to be bewailed in their Death, wh*
the Devils drag away to the Torments of the
fernal Pit, not they whom the holy Angels do c
duct to the Joys of Paradiſe: They are to be
wailed, who after Death are by the Devils tur
into Hell; and not they, who by the Angels
placed or ſet down in Heaven. O that theſe thi
might convince you of your folly, and awak
your Souls; and that ſo, as yet to know t
things of your Peace in your day, and the ti
of your Viſitation.

CHA

CHAP. VI.

Being a Call to all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to addreſs themſelves to the great Work of making all ready for a dying hour.

WHat is the Language of all this? Verily it calls aloud upon all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to make it our great Buſineſs to ſet all things right in the matters of our Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour: And O that we would make this improvement of this great Truth, and of God's preparing Goodneſs to us! He ſpares us, and why does he ſpare us, but that we ſhould ſet all things right, and make all things ready? O that we would now fall in with the End and Deſign of God herein, making it our great Care and Buſineſs in Time to provide for Eternity, in Life to make ready for Death. Some of you, I verily believe, are about this Work, and the Lord proſper you in it: You know you were born for Eternity, and you do endeavour to live for Eternity; Your great Work in time is to make proviſion for a bleſſed Eternity. O happy Souls that you are! Others of us, and thoſe, by far the moſt (I fear) are utterly negligent in this Buſineſs; Death and Eternity are little minded by us; but we are in a ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure Spirit, and to ſuch (methinks) this Truth ſpeaks in a Language much like to that of the Ship-Maſter to *Jonah*, Chap. 1. 6. *What meaneſt thou*

O ſleeper? Ariſe and call upon thy God, if [illegible] *be he will think on us, that we periſh not.* S[illegible] what mean you, O you ſleepy, drowſy, ſ[illegible] cure Souls! Ariſe, make ready for a dyi[illegible] Hour; ſet all things right, all things in orde[illegible] in your ſpiritual Concernments, leſt Dea[illegible] come upon you unawares, and you be loſt fo[illegible] ever; and to ſuch of us I would ſay, as ſome[illegible] times God did by the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, Is[illegible] 38. 1. *Set thine Houſe in order, for thou ſhal[illegible] die, and not live.* So I ſay to you, ſet you[illegible] Hearts in order, your ſpiritual Concerns in or[illegible] der; make all even between God and you[illegible] for you ſhall ſhortly die, and not live; you[illegible] ſhall ſhortly go hence and be no more. And[illegible] why ſhould we not all do ſo, if you be to[illegible] change your Condition in the World, how[illegible] careful and ſolicitous are you to have al[illegible] things ready and in order for that Change? Why (my Beloved) you are ſhortly to paſs un[illegible] der that great and laſt Change; a Change from[illegible] Time to Eternity; and will you have no care, no ſolicitude to make ready for that Change? If you are to take a Journey, though but a few Miles, or to make a Voyage into a ſtrange Land; O how are you concerned to have all things ready, all things in a prepared poſture, in order thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould not you be more concerned to make ready for your great Journey, your laſt and great Voyage? You are making a Journey, a Voyage out of Time into Eternity; you are juſt launching forth into the great Ocean: And what, nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing

thing ſet right in order thereunto? That is ſtrange! If you have ſome great Buſineſs, a Buſineſs of more than ordinary importance to be done, or a Suit at Law to be tryed or determined; O how cloſe do you follow it? And how careful are you to have all things ready in order thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould you not be as careful and diligent to prepare, and ſet all things right for the great Buſineſs of your Souls in another World? Have you any Buſineſs, any Concern of greater importance to you, than the Concern of your Souls, and Eternity? If you are to appear before ſome earthly Judge, eſpecially if it be about a matter that concerns your Life; O how thoughtful are you to have all things ready and in order, in reference thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould you not be as thoughtful and ſolicitous to make all ready, and to ſet all right, in order to your appearing before the Judge of all the Earth; and that about a matter which concerns the Life of your Souls, about a matter of Eternal Life and Death. Well what ſhall I ſay? Will you ſet about this great buſineſs, this great Concern? Or, is it all one with you, whether you live or die, are ſaved, or damned to Eternity? God yet ſpares you, bleſſed be his name; will you not ſet all right, before you go hence and be no more? Sinners will you ſet about this great Buſineſs? Your work is wholly yet to do; though, it may be, your Day is far ſpent, your Glaſs is almoſt run, your Sun near ſetting, and all your Work to do, Oh *'tis high time*

time for you to awake out of sleep; unless yo
mean to sleep the sleep of Eternal Dea
Saints, will you set about this great Busine
while God spares you? You have done som
what, but there is much more yet to be don
there is much out of order yet in your Sou
Grace weak, (it may be) Corruption stro
Peace broken, Evidences blurr'd and blott
Unbelief powerful within you, the He
much estranged from God; little suitablen
to Heaven in your Spirits, and the like; W
you now labour to *recover strength*? How m
ny of us may complain, as that holy Man (
Bernard) once did? *I am ashamed to live,*
cause I am so unprofitable; and I am afraid to
because I am so unprepared. Surely, this Tr
concerns the best of us all: and if we und
stand our selves, we cannot but know it;
Lord help us to know it effectually. An
after all, you would indeed address to this gr
Work and Business, then I have several gr
and weighty Directions to propound to y
for your help therein, of which some m
general, some more particular, and I wo
speak of each distinctly.

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CHAP. VII.

Wherein are propounded ſeveral General Directions, in order to a thorough preparation of Soul for a dying Hour.

1. WOuld you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then in your moſt proſperous and flouriſhing State here, maintain a frequent and ſerious remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits. *If a Man live many years* (ſaith Solomon) *and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of Darkneſs, for they are many.* Eccleſ. 11. 8. By the days of Darkneſs here, we are to underſtand Death, and the ſtate of Death; the abode of our Bodies in the Grave, which is *a Land of Darkneſs, and where the Light is as Darkneſs*, Job 10. 20. Now, ſaith he, though a man live many years, and rejoyce in them all; that is, *Though a Man live long and proſperouſly, long and joyfully*; yet let him remember Death and the Grave, the future State. 'Tis true, there are other Days of Darkneſs, which we are ſubject to in this World, and ſhould be remembred by us: Days of outward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of outward Trouble and Affliction; and Days of inward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of Spiritual Diſtreſs and Dereliction; and indeed this is of marvellous uſe to us in our Proſperity to remember theſe days of Darkneſs; but eſpecially we ſhould remember Death and the Grave:

Grave: We ſhould carry a lively remembran
of theſe Days of Darkneſs daily upon us; an
indeed our not remembring theſe days
Darkneſs, is one great Cauſe why we are
unready for Death, and the Grave, as we a
When we are in the midſt of our Enjoymen
and the ſtreams run pleaſantly about us, w
are too apt to forget theſe days of Darkneſ
we are ſo taken with our earthly Comfor
that we are loth to think of Death and Ete
nity: *putting far from us the evil Day*;
thoſe in their Enjoyments did, *Amos* 6. 3. A
therefore when theſe days come, they fi
us ſo unready, and our Spiritual Concer
ments ſo diſcompoſed as uſually they do. B
(my Beloved) as ever you would have all ri
and in order in your poor Souls againſt a dyi
hour comes: let me recommend this to yo
as one ſpecial Help; Maintain a deep a
frequent remembrance of Death and the Gra
upon your Spirits; remember the days
Darkneſs, and that eſpecially theſe tw
Ways.

1. Remember them ſo as to have the
much in your Meditation: Be much and fr
quent in the Contemplation of Death and t
Grave. This the Holy Ghoſt calls a *Conſid
ing our latter End*; and withal, mentions
a Buſineſs of great importance to us, *De*
32. 29. To conſider, is to revolve a thing
our Minds, and to keep it much in o
Thoughts and Meditations. And thus w
ſhould conſider our latter End, and rememb
the days of Darkneſs: This is that the Sai

of old have been much converſant in; they were much and frequent in the Thoughts and Meditations of Death: As I might inſtance in the good old Patriarchs *Job*, *David*, and others: And 'tis what does marvellouſly conduce to our preparation for it. *The meditation of Death* (ſaith one) *is Life*; it is that which greatly promotes our ſpiritual Life; therefore walk much among the Tombs, and converſe much and frequently with the thoughts of a dying hour.

2. Remember them ſo, as to have them daily in your expectation. In the midſt of all your Enjoyments, expect Death's approach daily: This is called *a waiting for our Change. All the days of my appointed Time, will I wait till my Change comes*, Job 14. 14. And we are commanded *to wait for the coming of our Lord*; as that which lies in the directeſt tendency to the exacteſt readineſs and preparation for his coming, *Luke* 12. 36. *Expect Death every hour* (ſaith one) *for 'tis every hour approaching thee: In the Morning when thou riſeſt, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt day: In the Evening, when thou lieſt down, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt night I may ever have in this World. I know not when my Lord will come, whether in the Morning, or in the Evening, at Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing: Therefore I will be always expecting his coming.* Wo and alas for us! we are apt to talk of many years yet to come, as he did, *Luke* 12. 9. whereas we ſhould live in the expectation of Death every moment. Thus let us conſider the days of Darkneſs

neſs, it will marvellouſly conduce to the preparation of the Soul for them: The meditation and expectation of Death, will conduce much (among others) to theſe four things:

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and ſelf-debaſing: *Let a Man own himſelf to be a Mortal* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *and Pride will, muſt down.* And *think frequently of Death* (ſaith another) *and thou wilt eaſily bring down thy proud Heart.* Hence alſo the Conſideration of Death is often in Scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghoſt, as an Argument to make us humble: *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. 3. 19. as elſewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our Hearts from this World, and the looſning of them from the things here below: *The time is ſhort* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *What then? What remaineth, that they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and thoſe that weep, as though they wept not; and thoſe that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; thoſe that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it; for the faſhion of this World paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. He mentions the ſhortneſs of time, as that the meditation and expectation whereof, has the directeſt tendency in it, to wean and looſen the Heart from all things here below. And indeed (as St. *Bernard* hath it] *he eaſily contemns all things here, who looks upon himſelf as dying daily.*

3. It will conduce much to the engaging the Heart to Heaven, and the things of Heaven:

to a ſerious purſuit of a bleſſed Eternity. So we find, *Heb.* 11. 13. &c. *Theſe all dyed in the Faith* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *not having received the Promiſes; but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them; and confeſſed, that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*; that is, they were apprehenſive they had but a little time to ſtay here: And what then? *They deſire a better Country*, that is, *an Heavenly*: The Apprehenſion they had of their departure hence, quickned them unto earneſt deſires and purſuits after the better Country, the heavenly Land; and indeed one great reaſon why we breath no more, and preſs no more after Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, is, becauſe we ſo ſeldom remember theſe days of Darkneſs.

4. It will conduce much to the quickning of the Heart to Duty, and to Diligence and Faithfulneſs therein. Chriſt himſelf made uſe of it for this End: *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no Man can Work*, John 9. 4. *Peter* alſo that holy Apoſtle made uſe of it to that end: *I will not be negligent* (ſaith he) to do ſo and ſo in the way of my Duty, *as knowing that ſhortly I ſhall put off this Tabernacle*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13, 34. The conſideration of the near approach of his Death quickned him to his Work and Duty. And the Scripture propounds it, as that which has a tendency to this thing: *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might* (ſaith Solomon;) *for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave, whither thou art*

art going, Eccleſ. 9. 10. He propounds the Conſideration of our going to the Grave, as a means to quicken us to our preſent Work. By all which we ſee, how much the ſerious remembrance of the days of Darkneſs muſt needs contribute to our readineſs and preparedneſs for theſe Days: Therefore be much in this Work. For my own part, I have hardly found any one thing more quickning and engaging upon my Spirit than this: And Souls, I would beg you, as you would live for ever, think often of Death.

2. Would you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be not fond of long Life here in this World; but rather covet to live as much as poſſibly in a little time. I would ſpeak to each diſtinctly.

1. Be not fond of long Life here in this World. A fond hope and deſire of long Life here, is one of the greateſt Enemies to a true preparation of Soul for our departure hence. For pray obſerve, take a Man that is fond of long Life here, and all his Thoughts and Projects are for this World: he is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the concerns of Time, ſcarce allowing himſelf one ſerious Thought for Death and Eternity: A ſad inſtance you have hereof in this rich Man, *Luke* 12. 19. He reckoned upon many Years upon a long Life here; and what are the things he is taken up about? Verily the things of this World only, the increaſe of his Goods, and where to ſtore his Treaſures. Fond hope

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and deſires of long Life here, will certainly produce great Delays, if not utter Neglects, as in the great Work and Concern of our Souls and Eternity. As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the Concerns of your Souls when you come to die, be not fond of long Life here, but ſit as looſe in your Thoughts, Hopes, and Deſires, both of this Life, and all the Enjoyments of it, as poſſibly you can. And indeed (my Beloved) to reaſon it a little with you, why ſhould you be fond of long life here? Why ſhould you covet a long ſtay in this World? I would only plead with you in two things as to this:

1. What is this World, and what have we here, that we ſhould here covet a long ſtay? Is this World ſuch a ſweet, ſuch an amiable, ſuch a deſirable thing? It is an angry World, a frowning, a dirty, a bewitching, enſnaring World: 'Tis a Waſte, howling Wilderneſs, a ſtrange Land, an Houſe of Bondage, a troubleſome, tempeſtuous Sea, an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood; ſuch I am ſure 'tis oftentimes to the poor Saints and People of God; and what have we here? Why, here we have *Fears within and Fightings without, Troubles on every ſide*, and from all hands; from Friends, from Enemies, from Men, from Devils; here we have Sorrow, Snares, Loſſes, Wounds, Deaths, Dangers, Temptations, Seductions, Diſappointments, *vexation of Spirit*: And truly, little elſe is to be expected by us here, except that which is worſe than all this, (*viz*) daily raiſings and ebullitions of Luſt, violent eruptions

of Corruptions, great aboundings of Sin and Iniquity, both in our ſelves, and others: continual breakings with God, and departing from him, renewing and encreaſing Sin and Guilt daily. Indeed this World is full of Sin and Temptation to Sin: 'Tis (as *Auſtin* ſays) *tota Tentatio*, all Temptation; and as 'tis all Temptation, ſo 'tis little elſe but Sin: and why ſhould we covet a long ſtay here? *Why* (ſays one of the Ancients) *ſhould we ſo much deſire that Life in which, by how much the longer we live, by ſo much the more we ſin; and the more numerous our days are, the more numerous will our ſins be?* Who would deſire to ſtay long in a Priſon, or a Dungeon, in a ſtate and place of Sin and Sorrow? And ſuch is this World.

2. Is there not a better Life, a better place, a better ſtate for our Souls to long and aſpire after? What do you think of the Life above, a whole Eternity ſpent in the Divine Preſence, in the boſom of Divine Love, a life of *Love*, a life of *Pleaſure*, a Life of *Joy*, a Life of *Admiration*, a Life of *Holineſs*, perfect and unſpotted Holineſs, a Life every way correſpondent to the Divine Life, and the Divine Will? Is not this a better Life? *To be with Chriſt is beſt of all*, Phil. 1. 23. To poſſeſs a Mantion in our Father's Houſe, prepared by our Lord and Head, Jeſus Chriſt, for us; to live for ever in the viſion and fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit; to dwell in the heavenly City, where no unclean thing can enter; to join in with the glorious Hoſt of Saints and Angels above, and with them to ſpend a whole Eterni-

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ry in Songs of Praiſes and Hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb; to take up all out Waters at the Fountain-head; and indeed to dive and bath unchangeably in the Fountain of all Delights at the Father's right hand: O how ſweet is this Life! And how much to be deſired by us! In a word (my Beloved) the Saints, when in the beſt frame, have many of them been ſo far from being fond of long Life here, that indeed they have thought it long till the time came, when they ſhould go hence and be no more, crying out with an holy impatience. *Why is his Chariot ſo long a coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?*

2. Covet to live much in a little time. 'Tis ſaid of the Reverend and worthy Divine, Dr. *Preſton*, that he deſired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little time. And our Lord himſelf (you know) did not long live in this World; but he lived much in a little time; he did much Work in a few days for God and Souls. And indeed (my Beloved) 'tis not a long Life but a fruitful Life, that is moſt amiable, moſt deſirable, and moſt like his Life, who is Life it ſelf. 'Tis not he that lives many Years, but he that lives much in a few Years, that is the moſt happy Soul. I know thoſe, whoſe Ambition it is not to live long, but to live fruitfully, and to do as much as poſſibly they can in a little time. And might they have their Opinion or Choice, it would be this. To live much in a little time; and then have their diſmiſſion to reſt. And (my Beloved) let this be your Choice, and your Ambition;

bition; be casting about in your selves, how you may live much in a little time; how you may compass much spiritual Work and Business in a few days; Labour to treasure up much Grace, much Experience of God and his Love; to bring a large Revenue of Glory to him, and the like. And for this end possess your Souls with a deep sense of the exceeding worth and preciousness of Time; and accordingly set your selves to redeem it, looking upon the loss thereof to be the greatest loss in the World. *Ephes.* 5. 16. we are commanded to *redeem the time*; and what is it to redeem the time, but to esteem Time as precious, as a thing of incomparable Worth and Value; and accordingly to make the best and highest Improvement of it for the Honour of God, and good of our Souls, that possibly we can? It is to fill up our Time with Duty, and our Duties with Grace; to make use of Time for those ends, for which Time is given us; not to eat, and drink, and solace our selves in the Creature, but to serve and honour the Creator! *to work out our Salvation*; to get acquaintance with God and Christ; to make sure of Heaven and a blessed Eternity. O Sirs! look upon Time as precious; so indeed it is: Time is the most weighty and momentous thing in the World: 'Tis that which our Eternal *ALL* depends upon: According as we do, or do not manage or improve our Time well, so will it go with us for ever. 'Tis a sweet Meditation which I have read in a Discourse of an holy Man: *This Life* (saith he) *of ours is most swift*;

ſwift; and yet in it eternal Life is either gotten or loſt for ever. This Life of ours is moſt miſerable; and yet in it eternal Happineſs is either gotten or loſt for ever. No leſs than a whole Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, Salvation or Damnation, depends upon our uſe and management of our little time here in this World, *As the tree falls ſo it lies*, Eccleſ. 11. 3. As it is with us when we go out of time, ſo it will be with us to all eternity; and this we ſhould be much in the thoughts of, accounting therefore the loſs of time to be the greateſt loſs. 'Tis a weighty ſaying, which I have read in one of the Antients, *It is a great and heavy loſs indeed* (ſaith he) *when we neither do good, nor think good* (and let me add, nor get good) *but we ſuffer our hearts to wander abroad about vain and unprofitable things; and yet it is too difficult to reſtrain or keep them back from theſe things.* Truly, no loſs like the loſs of Time; the loſs of Eſtate, the loſs of Trade, the loſs of this or the other outward comfort, is nothing to the loſs of time. Theſe being loſt, may be recovered again; but Time being loſt, can never be recovered more. Accordingly ſet your ſelves to redeem it, and do it as much as poſſibly you can, accounting that day loſt, wherein you have not done ſomething for God and your Souls. The truth is, we live no more than we are converſant in the Work of God and our Souls: For as for that which we call Life, that is not ſpent in this Work, it is not indeed to be accounted Life.

Thirdly, Would you indeed ſet all things

right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then think much and often with your ſelves, how great a Change Death will make with you when ever it comes. Death is a Change, and in many reſpects the greateſt Change which the Sons of Men are to paſs through, *All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my Change come*, Job 14. 14. *Job* had many Changes, and great Changes: *Changes and War were upon him*, as he complained, *Job* 10. 16. But no change like this of Death, this was the great Change, and this he waited for all his days. Indeed Death is a great Change to every Man and Woman, come when or how it will; 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives Men of all their Enjoyments here; which diſſolves the union betwixt Soul and Body; which turns the Body to Duſt and Putrefaction; and (which is unſpeakably more than this) it is that through which the Soul enters into the immediate Preſence of God, and ſtates it in Eternity; it is a Change from time to Eternity, from Works to Rewards, a Reward ſuitable to the work we have here been doing, whether it be good or evil; and is not this a great Change? Take a few hints in particular about it, to ſhew the greatneſs of it.

First, It is ſuch a Change, as all other Changes upon the outward Man are but leading and introductory unto, and into which at laſt they all iſſue, and reſolve themſelves. We paſs through many Changes here in this World. We may ſay as *Job*, *Changes and War are upon us*. But theſe are but leading and prelimi-

nary,

nary, as it were, to this laſt and great Change; theſe all are, or ſhould be to us, Monitors of this laſt Change, and do but a little darkly ſhadow it out unto us.

Secondly, It is ſuch a Change as calls for great ſpiritual Changes to paſs upon us here, to fit and prepare us for it; a change in our Minds, a Change in our Wills, a Change in our our Affections, a Change in our Converſation, a Change in our whole Man; a real Change, a through Change, an univerſal Change: *Old things muſt be done away, and all things muſt become new.* 2 Cor. 5. 17. The Mind muſt be changed from Darkneſs to Light, from Ignorance to Knowledg in ſpiritual Things: The Will muſt be changed from Enmity to Subjection, from Rebellion to Obedience to God and his Laws; the Affections muſt be changed from Earthineſs to Heavenlineſs, from Carnality to Spirituality; the Converſation muſt be changed from Sin to Holineſs; from Vanity and Looſneſs, to ſtrictneſs and ſerioufneſs in walking with God. O how great muſt that Change be, that calls for ſo many, and ſo great Changes, to fit and prepare us for it?

Thirdly, It is ſuch a Change, as tho' it do not put us out of being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of being than ever we yet had; a Change which ſets us naked before the Tribunal of God, to receive a definitive Sentence of Life or Death from him; a Change which brings us into the immediate ſight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a revenging Judge;

Judge; a Change which fully opens the Eyes of the Soul, and makes him to ſee both Grace and Sin, Heaven and Hell; Grace in its Amiableneſs, Sin in its Odiouſneſs, Heaven in its Glory, and Hell in its Horrour: For (my Beloved) whatever we are, whether Good or Bad, Saints or Sinners; yet when we die, our Eyes will be fully opened, to ſee theſe things; we ſhall ſee unutterable things; if we be good, we ſhall ſee them with Joy and Exultation; if we be bad, we ſhall ſee them with Anguiſh and Confuſion of Soul.

Fourthly, It is ſuch a Change, as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into unſpeakably greater things, either of Happineſs or Miſery, Comfort or Confuſion, than ever here we knew, or were capable of; a Change, which in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, carries the Soul from ſmall firſt-fruits to the full Vintage; from a few drops to a bottomleſs, boundleſs Ocean of either Happineſs or Vengeance, Delight or Torment. And withal there leaves him without any poſſibility of change or alteration for ever, but that of its re-union with the Body; for its ſuch a Change, as leaves the ſtate of the Soul for ever unchangeable. O then, think much and often with your ſelves, how great a Change Death will make with you! Certainly, did Men think and conſider with themſelves, how great a Change Death will make with them when it comes, they would not leave the matters of their Souls in ſuch diſorder and diſcompoſure, in ſuch an unready poſture for it as they do.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then preſently ſet upon Soul-work, without admitting of the leaſt delay or procraſtination upon any account whatſoever: Delays and procraſtinations in the work of our Souls and Eternity, is the high-way to Death and Ruin. What was it that ruined the fooliſh Virgins, but their delays in this great Work, and their neglect of the great Concerns of their Souls, till it was too late to mind them? *Mat.* 25. *begin.* *Felix* alſo was in a fair way, and had a fair opportunity before him, to have provided for another World; but he delayed, and his delay (for ought we know) was his ruin, *Acts* 22. 25. Truly the Heart is very apt to delay and procraſtinate Soul-work: It is apt to cry out, To morrow, to morrow. Hence it is that the Scripture calls ſo often upon us for a ſpeedy engaging in the work of our Souls; the Scripture ſaith, *Now*, and *to day*; *now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And *to day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. And if the Scripture ſaith, *Now*, Why ſhouldſt thou talk of hereafter? If the Scripture ſaith *to day*, why ſhouldſt thou talk of to morrow? *Auſtin* confeſſeth this, and withal tells us, there is ſcarce any end of delays, if once we give way to them: *I delayed* (ſaith he) *to be converted to God, and put off my living to him from day to day.* And elſewhere he tells us, that when God called upon him to awake to his Work, he returned nothing but a few

few ſleepy words; *Anon, Lord*, (ſaith he) *Anon; bear with me a little: But this Anon and Anon had no end; and this, bear with me a little went on a long way.* Take heed of this, this hath been the ruin of Thouſands, and ten Thouſands: How many have been convinced that it is their Duty, and Intereſt both, to fall in with the Work of God and their Souls, to make preparation for another World? But they have put it off till hereafter, and ſatisfied their Conſciences with Reſolutions hereafter to do ſo and ſo; and have thus loſt their ſeaſon: Oh fall preſently without delay upon Soul-work: and to quicken you a little hereunto, conſider four things:

Firſt, Conſider the unreaſonableneſs of Delays; no juſt Plea can be made, nor true Account given, why you ſhould delay your Soul-work one moment: The Devil and a Man's own Heart will make many Pleas, but no juſt Plea can be made; they will tell you it is too ſoon, you are young, and have time enough before you; what need you engage ſo ſoon? But is this a rational Plea? Is it too ſoon to be ſaved, too ſoon to be happy, too ſoon to ſecure your eternal Intereſt? Is it too ſoon to lay hold on eternal Life? Is it too ſoon to know and enjoy God? Is it too ſoon to be out of danger of periſhing eternally? Why truly it cannot be too ſoon for theſe things; beſides, God calls for thy Youth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth*, Eccleſ. 12. 1. And he greatly values the kindneſs of thy Youth, *Jer.* 2. 2. Again, they will ſuggeſt, that ſuch and

ſuch

ſuch a Buſineſs muſt be diſpatched, ſuch a Work done and carried off your hands, and then you may attend this Work; *Lord* (ſaith he to *Chriſt*) *I will follow thee; but ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father.* And ſaith another, *Lord, I will follow thee; but firſt let me go and bid them farewel which are at home*, Luke 9. 57, 61. But Friends, let me ask you, if there be any buſineſs to be diſpatched like the buſineſs of your Souls, and Eternity? Is there any thing upon your hand, that is of ſo much worth as your Souls, and of ſo much weight as Eternity? Is there any thing you are ſo nearly concerned to mind, as that which is indeed the one thing neceſſary, even the ſaving of your Souls? Oh! The whole World is nothing to this, and the greateſt concernments on Earth are but trifles to this Concern. Again, they will tell you it is an inconvenient Seaſon, and hereafter the Work may be better done and minded by you, than now it can; which was *Felix*'s caſe in the place before mentioned, *Act.* 24. 25. But hearken, Soul, art thou ſure of another Seaſon? And art thou ſure that that will be a more convenient Seaſon? Surely no: If it be not convenient to day, thou may'ſt fear it will be leſs convenient to morrow; that Devil and deceitful Heart that tells thee it is not convenient now, will make proviſion that it ſhall be leſs convenient hereafter. O therefore break through all theſe pleas, and fall ſpeedily upon Soul-work.

Secondly, Conſider the danger of Delays: Delays in this caſe are exceeding dangerous; one

one day's, yea (for any thing I know) one hour's delay herein, may prove thine eternal undoing! it may prove the loſs of Chriſt, the loſs of Heaven, and the loſs of thy Soul, and all for ever. Alas! Art thou ſure thou ſhalt live one day, one hour more in this World? For ought thou knoweſt, the next moment thou goeſt down into the Grave, *Job* 21. 13. But in caſe thou ſhouldſt live longer in the World, art thou ſure the Goſpel, and the means of Grace ſhall be continued to thee? If thou ſhouldſt not be taken from the World, yet the Goſpel may be taken from thee; though the day of thy life may laſt a while longer, yet the day of Goſpel-Grace and Mercy, may ſuddenly expire; and if that be once gone, all the Tenders of Chriſt, all the Offers of Grace, all the Exhibitions of Life and Salvation are gone; if the Goſpel be once gone, thy Seaſon is gone, and thy Soul is gone, and thy Salvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *Now is the accepted time*, ſpeaking of the Day of Goſpel-Mercy, *Now is the Day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. Or, grant thou ſhouldſt live, and the Goſpel ſhould be continued to thee, as to the outward means; yet art thou ſure that the day and ſeaſon of Grace will laſt any longer than this preſent moment? Remember that ſad word which the Lord breathed out with Tears in his Eyes, over neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 43. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Alas! how ſoon may God withdraw

withdraw his Spirit from thee? How ſoon may he call home his grieved Spirit from thy neglecting, reſiſting Soul, once for all, ſaying, My Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with that Man? *Gen.* 6. 3. How ſoon may God ſeal thee up under judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of Heart, ſo that thou ſhalt never be able to believe, or to do any thing for the good of thy Soul, in order to another World? Thou talkeſt of to morrow, and of hereafter; but who knows, but that before to morrow, God may clap the Seal of an hard Heart, and a blind Mind upon thee? So as that tho' thou ſhouldſt live a thouſand Years, and withal enjoy the faireſt means that ever any Soul enjoyed; yet thou ſhouldſt be never able to believe or repent, to do any thing for the working out of thy Salvation. It is oftentimes his way of proceeding with neglecting, delaying ones, *Iſa.* 6. 10. *Job* 11. 39, 40. Or how ſoon may the Oath of God go forth againſt thee? Thou talkeſt of to morrow; but alas! who knows but that before to morrow, *God may ſwear in his wrath, thou ſhalt not enter into his reſt?* It is what is threatned againſt ſuch as will not hear his Voice to day, but harden their Hearts againſt him, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There is a time when God's Oath goeth forth againſt Souls, and ſuch and ſuch Sinners, for their contempt and neglect of *Chriſt* and *Grace*; a time not only when God ſaith, but ſweareth, and that in Wrath, that they ſhould never enter into his Reſt; and if once God's Oath is gone out againſt a Man, that Man is paſt recovery;

very; then farewel *Chriſt*, and Heaven, and Soul, and all for ever. O how dangerous are delays! Therefore take heed of them, and ſet preſently upon Soul-work.

Thirdly, Conſider the diſadvantage of delays. Delays herein are diſadvantageous, as well as dangerous. Indeed, were there no danger in them (I mean as to the Eternal State) yet the diſadvantage of them is ſo great, as if rightly conſidered, might be enough to antidote the Soul againſt them, and engage it preſently in the work which relates to another World. Pray conſider it a little; by Delays the Soul loſeth much ſweet Communion with Chriſt, and many a bleſſed Communication of Love from him, which he might enjoy. The ſooner we fall upon the Work of Heaven and Eternity, the ſooner we come to a taſte and beginning of Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity in our Souls: O the ſweet Embraces, the bleſſed Diſcoveries, the glorious Incomes of Love and Delight that the Soul loſes by his Delays to get into *Chriſt*, and to walk with *God*, and to mind eternal Concernments! Poor Soul, by thy Delays thou haſt lived upon Husks and Swill all thy Days hitherto, whereas thou mighteſt have eaten Bread in thy Father's Houſe, and drunk Wine new in thy Father's Kingdom: Thou haſt lived on the muddy, dungy, droſſie delights of Sin and the Creature, whereas thou mighteſt have ſolaced and delighted thy Soul with thoſe chriſtal ſtreams of undefiled Pleaſures, which are at Chriſt's and his Father's right hand. Beſides, by Delays

days, the Work of thy Soul grows more difficult; hereby Corruption grows more ſtrong, and the Heart grows more hard: By every days delay, the old Enmity ſtrengthens it ſelf, and the Soul is more and more ſettled upon its Lees. For accuſtomedneſs in ſinning, hardens the Heart in Sin, as is hinted, *Jer.* 13. 23. Every day the Soul is more alienated from Chriſt, and hardened againſt him. At beſt, if thy Soul doth at laſt come to ſee its need of Chriſt, and deſireth to cloſe with him, and to mind the Work and Concerns of another World; yet the longer thou delayeſt this Buſineſs, the greater Temptations thou wilt have to get over: for, though now thy Heart ſaith it is too ſoon, yet after a few days delay, it will ſay it is too late; it will be apt to conclude, that now thy day is over, and now Chriſt will have nothing to do with thee: O why ſhouldſt thou be ſuch an Enemy to thy own Soul, as to run it upon theſe diſadvantages? Rather avoid them by falling preſently upon Soul-work.

Fourthly, Conſider the ſinfulneſs of Delays, and the horrible guilt they bring upon the Soul: As Delays are dangerous and diſadvantageous, ſo they are ſinful too, exceeding ſinful, and provoking to the God of Heaven. The truth is, were there no danger in them, no diſadvantage by them to the Soul; yet the ſinfulneſs of them is ſuch, as ſhould make us afraid of them: In every days delay to mind, and purſue Soul-work, there is poſitive Rebellion and Diſobedience to the Will and Com-

mand

mand of God: For the Command is, *To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your hearts* Heb. 3. 7, 8. By delaying therefore, thou rebelleſt againſt the Commandment. In every days delay to mind and purſue Soul-work there is horrible unkindneſs and ingratitude to God and Chriſt; which ſurely is a black Sin and brings great Guilt upon the Soul. God ſpares you time after time, when he might caſt you off the next moment. And this he doth, that you may purſue the work of your Souls and Eternity; and O what unkindneſs what ingratitude muſt it be in us to neglect and put off this Work? In every delay to mind and purſue Soul-work, there is much contempt of Chriſt and Grace; and this is that which makes it be exceeding ſinful; Chriſt offers himſelf, and his Grace to you, he offers you Life, he offers you Peace, he offers you Pardon, he offers you Righteouſneſs, he offers you Strength, he offers you all the Treaſures of Heaven; and withal calls upon you to accept theſe offers, and to take home theſe things to your ſelves; but you, by your Delays pour contempt upon all; you in effect ſay neither Chriſt, nor his Grace, nor the purchaſe of his Blood, are worth minding, worth looking after. O what contempt is this? and what Sin is this? By delays you do in effect ſay, there is ſomething better than Chriſt, and ſomething of greater concernment to you than Salvation by Chriſt; you plainly ſay that indeed you will have Chriſt hereafter, and Salvation hereafter; but for the preſent you had much

much rather have your Luſts and Worldly Pleaſures. Oh? tremble at the thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your delays, and put you immediately upon Soul-work. In a word, never any pretended that they minded the Concerns of their Souls, Union with Chriſt, walking with God, making ſure their Calling and Election ſo ſoon; many have repented that they have minded theſe things ſo late. I remember a bitter Complaint of *Auſtin* in his Book of Confeſſions, *I have loved thee too late*, ſaith he, *O thou ſo Ancient, and yet ſo new a Beauty, I have loved thee too late.* He bewails that he had ſo long laid out his Love upon the Creature, and not given Chriſt his Love. Could you ask all the Saints in Heaven, whether ever they repented that they minded the Work of Chriſt, and their Souls ſo ſoon? They would tell you no, they repented of nothing but that they minded it ſo late. Once more therefore let me call upon you, to fall immediately upon Soul-work, and never reſt till thy heart cries out to God as *Auſtin* did, when God had really ſhewed him himſelf, and made him ſenſible of his Sins; *When God*, ſaith he, *had ſhewed me my Sin and Miſery, there aroſe a great ſtorm within me, which carried with it a great ſhower of Tears; and indeed, I let looſe the Reins to Tears, crying out to God in ſuch words as theſe; O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou be angry? How long ſhall it be ſaid, too morrow, and too morrow? Wherefore may it not be now? Why may there not an end be put to my Sin and Filthineſs this*

very

very hour ? And indeed, God made that ve
ſeaſon, the ſeaſon of his Converſion : So
bour to ſee thy Sin and Miſery ſo far, as th
mayeſt cry out with a holy reſtleſneſs to G
How long ſhall it be to morrow, and to m
row ? Why may it not be turned to thee no
Why may not my Soul be engaged in the wo
of Heaven and Eternity now ?

Fifthly ; Would you indeed ſet all right
your Souls, and make all ready for a dy
hour ? Then be much and importunate w
God in Prayer, to teach you ſo to numb
your days, as to apply your Hearts to W
dom : This I ground upon *Pſalm* 90. 1
where *Moſes* the Man of God is found in t
practiſe. *Lord* (ſaith he) *teach us to numb
our days, that we may apply our Hearts u
Wiſdom. To number our Days, is not to numb
them in an Arithmetical, but a Spiritual wa
it is not to caſt up how many days the Life
Man conſiſts of; that is eaſily done ; but it is ſp
ritually and practically to conſider, and lay
heart, the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our live
together with the various miſeries and Calam
ties that do attend them.* So *Mollerus*. It is ſ
rioufly and fiducially to contemplate the va
ty of Life, as ſhort and uncertain, and as
tended with Sorrows, Miſeries and innume
ble Troubles, and to apply thy Heart to W
dom : 'Tis to make Religion, and the wo
of a Man's Soul, his main buſineſs ; it is
make it his great buſineſs, and endeavour
get an intereſt in God and Chriſt, in the C
venant of Grace and Eternal Life ; and

tim

me to provide for, and make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity; it is to ſet a Man's whole Soul to the work of God, and his own Salvation. Now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a dying hour, beg of God to teach you thus to number your days, and thus to apply your Hearts to Wiſdom. There are two things I would obſerve, and ſo cloſe this.

Firſt, That ſuch a numbring of our days, is what the beſt of Saints need, and may make great uſe of. *Moſes* was a very holy Man, and he looked upon it as a work uſeful, and of great importance to him, to contemplate the vanity of Life, and to think of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of his abode here; the moſt holy Souls need this; the moſt holy Souls need humbling, they need weaning from this World, they need quickning unto Duty, they need to have their Hearts awakned, to mind Heaven, and a future Life; and the right numbring of our days, is that which greatly conduceth thereunto.

Secondly, Obſerve, That as this is a work needful and uſeful for the beſt of Saints to be employed in; ſo it is a work above their own Strength, and that which they need Divine Aſſiſtance to enable them unto. *Moſes* was an eminently holy Man, and yet as he ſaw he had need of this, ſo he ſaw it was a work above his Power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himſelf amongſt the reſt, and prays for his teaching herein. Let us do likewiſe, let us lie much at the foot of *God* for his teach-

ings,

ings, whereby we may be enabled ſo to num-
ber our days, as thus to apply our Hearts u
to Wiſdom; beg him to make us ſee the v
nity and uncertainty of our Lives, and that
as effectually to engage us to make out after
better Life.

CHAP. VIII.

*Wherein more particular Helps and Directio
are laid down, in order to the ſetting
things right, and making all ready for a dyi
hour.*

BUT I would come nearer this great Bu
neſs, and give you ſome more particul
Directions, in order to your making all rea
for a dying hour. And,

Firſt, Would you indeed have all thin
right in the matters of your Souls for a dyi
hour? then get into Chriſt, get Union wi
Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt by believin
Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chri
is moſt requiſite and neceſſary to fit and pr
pare us for a dying hour; and without w
have it, we can have nothing ſet right, no
thing in order, nothing in readineſs for th
hour. You know how the Scripture ſpeak
*He that hath the Son, hath Life, but he that ha
not the Son of God hath not Life*, 1 Joh. 5. 1
*And there is no Condemnation to them which a
in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. O my Beloved
we ſhall live or die, be ſaved or damned fo
eve

ever, according as we do or do not get an Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ. This is that which lies at the Bottom and Foundation of all, of all our Hopes, and of all our Mercies, or all our Comforts, of all our Acceptation and Communion with God, of all Grace on Earth, and all Glory in Heaven; and without it, whatsoever our Attainments in Religion are, whatever our Profession may be, whatever Place or Esteem we may have in the Church of God, though never so raised and eminent, yet we have not any thing that will avail us in a dying Hour. I remember a Saying of a Learned Man, *That thou mayst live in Death*, saith he, *get into Christ, implant thy self into Christ by believing. Faith joins and unites us to Christ, and they that are in Christ cannot die, for Christ is their Life.* And indeed, if we can have Union with Christ, he will be Life in Death it self to us: *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, die, having Union with Christ, being implanted into Christ, *Rev.* 14. 13. If we have Union with Christ, he will not be only Life in Death to us, but he will even turn Death it self into Life; the King of Terrors into a King of Comforts; insomuch that the Soul shall be able to triumph over it, as the Apostle doth, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57. Whereas without us, without Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ, we shall never be able to look Death in the Face with Comfort, but shall, when we come to die, be some of the miserablest Spectacles in the World. It is the Speech

of a worthy Divine, who is ſo long ſince gone hence, *A Chriſtleſs dying Man or Woman* (ſaith he) *is one of the ſaddeſt Spectacles in the World*. For a Man to be dying, and not Chriſtleſs, that is comfortable; for ſuch an one dies but to live for ever; he dies the Death of Nature, to live the Life of Glory; for a Man to be Chriſtleſs, and not dying, is ſomething tolerable: for who knows, but that the next meeting at an Ordinance, may be the Time of God's Love to him of drawing him into Chriſt. But for a man to be dying and Chriſtleſs, Chriſtleſs and dying too, that is intolerable, that is terrible indeed; for ſuch an one dies to be damned, and is he going off from all Hope and Poſſibilities of Mercy for ever: Oh therefore above all, preſs after Union with Chriſt and an Intereſt in Chriſt: This was *Paul's* great Care and Solicitude to the very laſt, that ſo he might go off the Stage with Comfort, and that for which he *accounted all things but Dung*, as moſt baſe and vile, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. O Soul, didſt thou indeed know and conſider how much Weight and Importance an Intereſt in Chriſt is to thee with Reference to thine eternal Happineſs, thou wouldſt cry out as eagerly for Chriſt, as *Rachel* did for her Children, ſaying, Give me Chriſt, or elſe I die; give me Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt, or I am undone eternally. Oh look to this great uniting Act of Faith, make a right Choice of Chriſt; chuſe him as your Lord and Head, your King and Saviour, and renew your Choice of him every Day, reſigning up your ſelves en-

tire

tirely to him, to be ſaved and governed by him in his own Way.

Secondly; Would you indeed have all ſet right, and made ready in the Matters of your Souls for a dying Hour? Then preſs after a firm and unſhaken Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God, and his Love, and of your Right and Title to eternal Life, of another, and better Life than this is here. Without ſome good Evidence for Heaven, and ſome well-grounded Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God and eternal Life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in ſuch a Preparedneſs for a dying Hour, as we ought to be. Though a Man have an Intereſt in God and his Love; though he hath a Right and Title to eternal Life and Happineſs; yet as long as he is in the Dark, and at at an uncertainty in his own Soul about it, things are out of Order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying Hour: For pray mark, as our Intereſt in this is requiſite to our dying happily; ſo the ſight and Aſſurance of that Intereſt, is requiſite to our dying comfortably: Indeed, when a Man hath attained to ſome good Evidence for Heaven, to ſome well-grounded Aſſurance of his Intereſt in God and Chriſt, then are things in a good Poſture with him in Reference to a dying Hour; then he can play with Death, and triumph over it; as *Job* did, when he could ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* Job 19. 25, 26. And as the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of it, 2 *Cor.* 5. 12. *We know that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we have a Building of*

God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens: For this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven. None of you do comfortably leave your Houſe unleſs you have another to go unto; much leſs can you comfortably quit this World, unleſs you have ſome well-grounded Aſſurance of another and a better Life. Take a Man that is in the Dark, and at a Loſs as to his Intereſt in God and Chriſt, and he knows not what Death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in Heaven or Hell, whether upon the Throne of Glory, or in the Priſon of eternal Darkneſs, in the Boſom of *Chriſt*'s Love, or under the Revelation of his infinite and eternal Wrath: And is ſuch an one ready for a dying hour? Surely no. Whatever therefore you would have things right and ready within indeed for a dying Hour, you muſt preſs after an Aſſurance of your Intereſt in God and Chriſt; you muſt do as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. You muſt every Day preſs after a fuller and firmer Aſſurance as to your eternal Intereſt; You muſt be much in Faith, much in Prayer, much in examining your Evidences, much in proving your State, much in looking after the Seal and Evidences of the bleſſed Spirit: Which is indeed all in all; and never reſt till you can ſay my Lord, and my God, my Heaven, my Glory; *God is the Rock of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* O then all will be ſweet and well *with* you. This is that which the Saints of old

old have laboured after with their whole Might. *Say unto my Soul* (ſaith *David* to *God*) *I am thy Salvation*, Pſal. 35. 3. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, and a Seal upon thine Arm*, Cant. 8. 6. This *Auſtin* preſſed much after, *Lord*, ſaith he, *tell me what thou art to me. Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation; ſo ſay it, that I may hear it: Behold, The Ears of my Heart are before thee, open them, O Lord, and ſay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.* O my Beloved, this is worth preſſing after, for this is the welcomeſt news a poor Soul can poſſibly hear, to be told that God is his, and Heaven is his, and Eternal Life is his: And when once this News is come, then welcome Life, and welcome Death; welcome Time, and welcome Eternity: then the *Soul* can ſay, O ſweet Eternity, O bleſſed Eternity! O Sirs, be not ſatisfied without ſome good Aſſurance of *God*'s Love to your Souls, and your Right and Title to Heaven and Eternal Life! Yea, without the fulleſt Aſſurance that is attainable here; for know, that there are degrees in Aſſurance it ſelf. The Scripture mentions three degrees of Aſſurance. Firſt, there is Aſſurance, *The work of Righteouſneſs is Peace, and the fruit of Righteouſneſs is Aſſurance for ever*, Iſaiah 31. 17. And *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, as in the place before quoted. Secondly, there is much Aſſurance: *Our Goſpel came unto you, not in Word only, but in Power, and in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and much Aſſurance*, 1 Theſſ. 1. 5. Thirdly, There is a full Aſſurance, *We deſire*

that every one of you do ſhew the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of Hope unto the end. Heb. 6. 11. Now my Beloved, I would not have you ſatisfied without Aſſurance, without much Aſſurance; yea, without a full Aſſurance; the more full your Aſſurance is, the more Chearfully, Joyfully, and Triumphantly will you die.

Thirdly, Would you indeed have all right all in order in the matter of your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then labour to maintain a conſtant actual Peace with God; every day making even with him, and renewing the Senſe of his pardoning Love in your Souls as a firm Union with Chriſt, and a well-grounded Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God, and Eternal Life; ſo alſo, an actual Peace with God, and a daily renewed Pardon from Him, is requiſite to a thorough readineſs and preparedneſs for a Dying Hour. *David* had an Intereſt in God; yea and his Intereſt was clear to him; yet how ſolicitous was he to get all even before God and him? and how uncomfortable was it with him, till he had renewed his Peace with God when by his fall it had been broken? *Pſalm* 51. 8, 12. This alſo is what is evidently held forth *Job* 7. 21. Where *Job* pleads thus with God; *Why doſt thou not pardon mine Iniquity, and take away my Tranſgreſſion? For now ſhall I ſleep in the Duſt; thou ſhalt ſeek me in the Morning, but I ſhall not be.* In the Verſe before, he acknowledgeth he had ſinned, and here he intimates, that God frowned on him for his Sin; the Senſe of pardoning Love was not renewed

in

in his Soul, which here therefore he pleads for, and that upon this account, becauſe he was ſpeedily to die; intimating he could not die with comfort, till he had a renewed Senſe of God's pardoning Love. And this is the very thing which *David* begs in the *Pſalm* of my Text, in order to his comfortable going hence, *(viz.) That God would take away his Tranſgreſſions*, Pſal. 39. 8. As long as there is any Sin, any Guilt lying upon our Conſciences, any Sin unpardoned, any Difference between God and us, any Frowns in his Face towards us, we are unready for Death, and cannot with that Comfort and boldneſs of Spirit welcome it as we ought; but when our Peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed Senſe of his pardoning Love in our Souls, then are things right and in order with us indeed, and we may think of Death with Boldneſs and Comfort, and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a Dying Hour; every day even things between God and you; every day get a freſh Senſe of Pardon from him.

Firſt, As near as poſſible may be, do nothing that may occaſion any breach between God and you, or raiſe any Frowns in his Face towards you: If you do not break with God, he will not break with you: All Breaches as to Peace and Friendſhip between God and us, begin on our part; yea, neither will God break with us for little things, in caſe they be not allowed by us, but watched and ſtriven againſt; therefore, as near as poſſibly you can

do nothing to break and interrupt your Peace with God for one Moment. And becauſe when you have done all, many things may and will fall out (we having ſinful ſinning Hearts, and living in a World of Snares and Temptations) for which God may juſtly frown upon us. Let us,

Secondly, Every day make even with him. In the cloſe of every day let us conſider where in we have broken with God, come ſhort of Duty, given any Grief and Diſtaſte to his Holy Spirit; and by Faith and Prayer let us ſue out the Pardon of it; and let us not lie down if poſſible, without ſome Intimation of his pardoning Love. For which end,

Firſt, We ſhould act Faith on the Blood and Advocateſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for Remiſſion of Sins*, Rom. 3. 24, 25. And indeed Chriſt hath ſet up a ſtanding Office in Heaven, which we may call the Pardon-Office; he procureth new Pardons for his People daily under their new Sins; *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins.* 1 John 2. 1, 2. Have daily recourſe to the Blood of Chriſt; truly without it there's no living; the Beſt, the Holieſt on Earth have daily need of his Blood, and ſhould have daily recourſe unto it, for the maintaining of their Peace, and for the renewing of God's pardoning Love in their Souls.

Secondly, We ſhould be humbly and earneſtly importunate with God in Prayer, reſolving

ſolving not to let him go without his Bleſſing, carrying upon our Spirits the Senſe of the worth, and alſo of our Unworthineſs of it. Thus the Holy Men of God of old have done: They have ſued out the Pardon of their Sins by Faith and Prayer, and gotten a freſh Senſe of God's Love when they have broken with him; as I might inſtance in *Job*, in *David*, and others. We ſhould every day Pray, as that Father did, *O Lord*, ſaith he, *do not after the manner of a Judge, weigh or conſider what I have done, what I have ſpoken, what I have thought; but blot out all my Sins with thy own Blood.* And as another of them did, *Lord*, ſaith he, *there is that in me which may offend thy holy Eyes, I know and confeſs it: But who ſhall cleanſe me? Or, to whom ſhall I fly for relief but to thee? O hide not thy Face from me.* Truly, when we have walked moſt Watchfully, moſt Circumſpectly, many things may, and will fall out, that may offend the pure Eyes of God's Glory, which we ſhould confeſs and bewail before him, ſuing out the Pardon of them by the Blood of his Son. Some of the Saints have made this their daily practice, and ſo have maintained their Peace for many Years together; and when they have come to die, have glorioufly triumphed over Death; and have gone off the Stage with much Comfort; and ſo ſhould we.

Fourthly, Would you indeed have all right? all in order in your Souls for a dying hour? Then be true and faithful to your own

Conſciences, that you may have them for you and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. Conſcience (my Beloved) is Chriſt's Deputy or Vicegerent in the Soul; it is both a Judge and a Witneſs for God within us; it either Accuſes or Excuſes, Acquits or Condemns, *Rom.* 2. 15. And according as Conſcience is either for us, or againſt us; ſo we are either ready, or not ready; prepared, or not prepared for Death and Judgment: If we have the Witneſs and Judgment of our Conſciences for us, then have we Boldneſs and Comfort both in Life and Death; then we can welcome Death's approach to us; but if the Witneſs and Judgment of Conſcience be againſt us, then Death cannot but be Terrible to us: *This is our rejoycing* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the Teſtimony of our Conſciences, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not in Fleſhly Wiſdom but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again, *If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. Oh my Beloved, as a Peace with God, ſo a ſound and holy Peace with a Man's own Conſcience (that is to ſay, to have the Witneſs and Judgment of a Man's own Conſcience for him, and not againſt him) is highly requiſite for a right diſpoſing and preparing of us for a Dying Hour. As ever therefore you would have all ready and in order againſt ſuch an hour, mind this, and look after this; be ſure you carry it ſo to your

own

own Conſciences, as that you may have them always for you, and not againſt you, while you live; and for you, and not againſt you, when you come to die. In order to which, mind theſe two things.

Firſt, Labour to get your Conſciences well enlightened and informed, and be much with God in Prayer; in order thereto, beg and implore God for a true and faithful Conſcience, a Conſcience that will bear a true and faithful Witneſs in your Souls, and that will paſs a right Judgment upon things, both upon your State and Actions. In *Heb.* 10. 21. we read of a true Heart, or a true Conſcience, that is, a Conſcience rightly informed, a Conſcience that bears a True and Faithful Witneſs, and that paſſeth a True and Faithful Judgment upon things: Such a Conſcience ſhould we beg of God, and labour by all means poſſible to attain unto. Oh my Beloved, it is a dangerous thing to have an erroneous Conſcience, a miſtaking Conſcience, a Conſcience not rightly informed: For pray mark, This is what leaves a Man under a neceſſity of Sinning, and ſo of grieving the Spirit of God on the one hand, and it endangereth his Peace and Comfort on the other hand; for having an erroneous Conſcience, whether we obey it, or obey it not, we Sin; if we obey it, we Sin, becauſe Conſcience commands what is not agreeable to the Word of God; if we obey it not, we Sin, becauſe we rebel againſt the Light and Dictates of Conſcience, omitting that which Conſcience tells us is a Duty, though it be not a Duty;

or

or do that which Conſcience tells us is a Sin though it be not a Sin; labour therefore to get your Conſciences well informed and enlightened.

Secondly, Be ſure you do nothing againſt the light and Dictates of Conſcience being rightly informed, but obey it in all things. In *Job* 24. 13. we read of ſome that *Rebel againſt the Light*, that is, that do Sin againſt their own Conſciences; which is a double Sin, a Sin cloathed with great Aggravations, and greatly diſcompoſeth us for a dying hour: But we muſt take heed of this, and liſten to the Voice of Conſcience; Conſcience regulated by the Word of God: God ſpeaks to us by our Conſciences, he ſpeaks to us through his Word by our Conſciences, and he ſpeaks to us through his Providence by our Conſciences; and we ſhould take heed of violating the Dictates, or ſpeaking of Conſcience in the leaſt. Doth not Conſcience many times tell us, ſuch and ſuch ways which we walk in are not Good and muſt be turned from, or we are Undone for ever? And now we ſhould be True and Faithful to our own Conſciences, and ſpeedily turn from thoſe ways; we ſhould have nothing to do with any thing that Conſcience condemns us in, or for. Again, doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that ſuch and ſuch Duties are totally neglected, or elſe ſeldom or ſlightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be converſant and diligent in the performance of? Now you ſhould herein alſo be Faithful and True to your own Conſciences;

living

living up to the Conſtant, Diligent, Spiritual Performance of thoſe Duties. Again, Doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that things are not right with you? That it is an evil Frame of ſpirit you live in? That you are too Carnal, too Light, too Vain, too Frothy, too Eager in your Purſuits of this World, and too Remiſs in your Purſuits of Heaven and Eternity? Now as ever you would be ready for a Dying Hour, you ſhould be Faithful to your own Conſcience, ſetting that right which is amiſs, and haſtening out of that evil Frame into the contrary gracious Frame. (O my Beloved) if you be True and Faithful to Conſcience, Conſcience will be True and Faithful to you, witneſsing for you, and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. In a word, In all things labour to keep a good Conſcience; this was *Paul*'s great Care and Exerciſe, *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men:* O this will be a Sweet and Bleſſed Exerciſe, and the more we are found in it while we live, the more Comfort will it afford us when we come to die.

Fithly, Would you indeed have all things right and in order, in the matters of your Souls, when a Dying Hour comes? Then labour for much Purity of Heart and Life, and by no means admit of any Sin, any Corruption whatſoever; the more Pure and Holy we are, the more ready we are, and in the better poſture things are with us for a Dying Hour: *Without Holineſs,* ſaith the Apoſtle, *no Man*

ſhall

ſhall ſee God, Heb. 12. 14. Holineſs is neceſſa
unto Happineſs; Holineſs is the way un
Happineſs; Holineſs is what fits and prepar
us for Happineſs, and brings unto Happi
neſs; yea, Holineſs is a part of our Happineſ
a great part of the Happineſs of Heaven
ſelf lies in Holineſs; accordingly the mo
Holy we are, the more we are ſuited to, a
prepared for the future Happineſs, and ſo f
Death and Judgment: For that which pr
pares us for the future Happineſs, that al
prepares us for Death, which is but an In-l
into that Happineſs for ever. Therefore if y
would have all things right, all things read
indeed for a Dying Hour, then labour for t
exacteſt Purity and Holineſs that poſſibly yo
can: This is that which the Apoſtle aims a
and prays for on the behalf of the *Theſſa-
nians*, as moſt conducing to the preparing
them for their later end, 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 12. 1
*And the Lord make you to abound and increa
in Love one towards another, and towards all Me
even as we do towards you, to the end we m
eſtabliſh your Hearts unblamable in Holineſs befo
God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lo
Jeſus Chriſt with all his Saints.* The poſtur
he would have them to be in at the Comin
of Chriſt, is the poſture of unblameable Hol
neſs, which indeed is the beſt and readie
poſture. The ſame things he prays for, i
order to the ſame end, in 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 23
*And the very God of Peace ſanctifie you wholly;
and I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul and
Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of
our*

our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This is that alſo which that other Apoſtle enjoyns in order hereunto, 2 *Pet.* 3 14. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameleſs.* The more Spotleſs and Blameleſs we are in our Spirits and Ways, the more ready we are for Death and Judgment. Oh, preſs after an eminency in Holineſs, admitting of none, no not the leaſt taint or tincture of Sin or ſinful Defilement upon any Terms whatſoever! Unholy Souls are unready Souls; they are unready for Death, unready for Judgment, unready for the future Life: And for Men to talk of being ready for theſe, and yet be Unholy, is the greateſt Folly in the World: Therefore labour for much Purity and Holineſs.

Firſt, Labour for much Purity and Holineſs in your Lives and Walkings: This is what God indiſpenſably calls for, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *As he that has called you is Holy, ſo be ye Holy in all manner of Converſation: Becauſe it is written, Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* We ſhould preſs after univerſal Holineſs: There ſhould be a Vein and a Tincture of Holineſs run through all we do, even our Civil as well as our Religious Actions; we ſhould as near as poſſible, be dedicated and devoted to God, and our Lives ſhould be Lives of walking with him. They and they only, who walk with God while they live, are thoſe who will be found ready to live with God when they come to die, As for all careleſs licentious ones, let them never talk of being ready for Death and future Life; for they are at an utter diſtance from any ſuch thing;

thing: Indeed ready they are, but for what? Ready for Hell, ready for the Wrath of God, ready for Deſtruction: But they are not at all ready for a Bleſſed Eternity. The Apoſtle weeps over ſuch, as being indeed thus ready, Phil. 3. 18. 19. *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe end is Deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly, whoſe Glory is their Shame, who mind earthly things.* Many there are who profeſs and hope well of themſelves, as to another Life, who yet are Looſe and Carnal, Wicked and Licentious in their Lives and Walkings: They do not watch and keep their Garments, but wallow in the Mire of their Luſts and Pollutions. They ſtrain their Profeſſion with foul, groſs and ſcandalous Sins; at leaſt they live and allow themſelves in ſome ſecret way and haunt of Sinning, indulging this and the other Luſt. But (my Beloved) theſe are far indeed from being ready for a Dying Hour; and muſt expect to be caſt off from God and Chriſt for ever. Such were thoſe, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *They came and cried, Lord, Lord:* came with their Gifts, Parts, and Privileges; but Chriſt ſent them away, with a *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.* So in *Jer.* 7. and beginning: We read of ſome that made Profeſſion of God and his ways, and yet walked in Sin and wallowed in all manner of Abomination. And what is the iſſue? Verſe the 15th, ſaith God, *I will caſt you out of my ſight*: God will at laſt caſt off all looſe, licentious Walkers

Pſal

Pſalm 21. 9. *David* prays thus, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* And truly, if you would not be gathered with Sinners at laſt, you muſt not walk in Sin with Sinners now: And as for the Saints themſelves, ſo far as they let down their Watch, and neglect their walking with God; ſo far as they give way to a looſe, vain, heedleſs way of Living; ſo far they have things out of order with them, and they are unready for a Dying Hour. *Behold, I come as a Thief* (ſaith Chriſt) *bleſſed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his Shame*, Rev. 16. 15. So far as the Saints carry it unbecoming their high and holy Profeſſion (which is too too frequent with them) ſo far they are ſhort of that compleat readineſs for Death and Eternity they ſhould preſs after.

Secondly, Labour for much Purity and Holineſs in your Hearts and Affections. We muſt be Pure and Holy within as well as without; in our Hearts and Affections, as well as in our Lives and Walkings, if we would have all right indeed for a Dying Hour. *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? And who ſhall ſtand in his Holy Place?* The Anſwer is, *He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart*, Pſal. 24. 3, 4. And Chriſt expreſly tells us, *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. Indeed impure Hearts are unfit to ſee God: He is a pure and holy God, nor may impure-hearted Ones expect that Bleſſed Sight. I remember a Saying which I have read in one of the Ancients, (which I look upon to be a great Saying)

ſaying) *Wo and alas! O Lord,* (ſaith he) *h*
prepoſterous is it? How raſh and unadviſed? H
inordinate? How remote from the Rule of t
Word of thy Truth and Wiſdom, for a Man
deſire to ſee God with an unclean Heart? O
have a watchful Eye upon your Hearts: A
labour to keep them as free from any taint a
tincture of Sin as poſſibly you can.

Firſt, Be ſure you ſuffer no Luſt to get up in
the Throne, where it is too often found. Wh
Sin is conſented to by the Will, the Luſt is
the Throne in the Heart; and indeed it
wonderful to think, how ſoon one or anoth
Corruption will mount up into the Throne
the Soul, if we let down our Watch bu
little: But Oh, take heed of this; ſo far
any one Luſt whatſoever is predominant wit
in us, ſo far we are marvellouſly unready for
Dying Hour. And not only ſo: But,

Secondly, Watch narrowly againſt the ver
firſt riſings and motions of Sin within; nip Lu
if poſſible, in the very Bud and Bloſſom. It
true, this calls upon us to have a very curio
Eye upon our Hearts; and indeed, ſuch an E
we ſhould have upon them, we muſt have up
them, if we mean to be Chriſtians indee
Grace will teach a Man, not only to oppoſe t
Acts of Sin, and to watch againſt the Reign
any Heart-Luſt; but alſo to oppoſe the ver
firſt motions and riſings of Sin in the Soul. An
the more you do this, the better poſture yo
are in for a Dying Hour.

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CHAP. IX.

A further Direction in order to a compleat Preparation for Death, to preſs after the nobleſt Strains of Grace. Several of theſe pointed at, and inſiſted on, as tending hereunto.

Sixthly, WOuld you indeed have all ready, and in order in your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then reſt not in low and ordinary, but aſpire after the higheſt and nobleſt Strains of Grace. The better to underſtand this, you muſt know, That there are ſome higher and more noble Strains of Grace than ordinary; Strains of Grace that carry a peculiar Glory and Excellency in them, and do in an eminent manner delight the Heart of God: Indeed every Strain of Grace, even the leaſt and loweſt, has a Beauty and Glory in it, and is a Pleaſure to God's Heart: The leaſt Dram of Godly Sorrow, the leaſt Holy Awe of God, and trembling at his Word, the leaſt breathing of Love and Deſire towards him, the leaſt leaning upon him, in a way of Hope and Dependance; Oh, it has a great Glory in it, and is a Delight to God's Soul; *The Lord taketh Pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy*, Pſal. 147. 11. But my Beloved, there are ſome more choice and eminent Strains and Actings of Grace, that are above the ordinary rate, and do peculiarly delight the Heart of God, and bring Honour to him; and the more you come up to theſe, and

and live under the Power of these, the m
ready posture you are in for a Dying Ho
Grace is the beginning of Glory: 'Tis (as
worthy Divine expresses it) *The Infancy of H*
ven and Glory; and the higher it rises in
the nearer it comes to Glory, and the more
fits us for it. Therefore I say rest not in l
and ordinary, but covet and press after
highest and noblest Strains of Grace, some
which I shall here set down, and insist a li
upon, in order to this great End of be
found under the exactest readiness for a Dy
Hour. The noble Strains of Grace I wo
have you come up unto, are these;

1. For a Man to be High, and yet Lo
high in Worth and Attainments, but low
Spirit; low in his own Thoughts and Ap
hensions of himself; to be humble under h
and great Acquirements, this is noble Gr
'Tis said of *Athanasius*, "Υψηλὸς τοῖς ἔργοις
ταπεινὸς δὲ τῷ φρονήματι —— That he
high in Worth, but low in Spirit: He had g
Attainments, but was very humble and lo
under all; which is mentioned as a pecu
Excellency in him. And I remember a Say
which I have read in one of the Ancien
speaking of Humility; *For a Man to be hu*
(says he) *in a low, despicable, abject conditi*
this is no great matter, but honourable Humil
that is to say, for a Man to be humble
an high and prosperous Condition, to be h
ble under eminent Employments; *This*
great thing, a rare Virtue indeed: O fo
Man to be high in Attainments, high in G
h

high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Successes, high in Place and Esteem among Men; and yet at the same time to be low in Mind, low in Heart, low in his Esteem and Apprehension of himself; this is an high and eminent Strain of Grace; this *Paul* excelled in, and 'twas his Crown and Glory; he was a Man of as high Attainments and Accomplishments as most that ever lived; he was high in Gifts, high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Successes, high in all true Worth and Excellency; and yet how low, how humble in Spirit was he? How little in his own Eyes, and how vile in his own Esteem? You know how he speaks of himself, *The chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Less then the least of all Saints*, Ephes. 3. 8. *I am the least of the Apostles: Not worthy to be called an Apostle*, 1 Cor. 15. 9. *I am nothing*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. This also was a part of Christ's Crown and Glory: Who ever so eminent in Gifts and Graces? Who ever abounded with such Glorious Endowments as he? And yet who so Meek, so Humble, so Lowly, as he? *Learn of me* (saith he) *for I am meek and Lowly in heart*, Mat. 11. 29. In a Verse or two before he had told us, that *all things were delivered unto him by the Father*; and yet here, *I am meek and lowly in heart*: He was humble under all his Advancements and Attainments: Oh labour to be like him herein; whatever your Attainments are, labour to be humble under them, and that because he was so, *Blush, O Dust and Ashes! Blush to think of being*

ing proud, be aſhamed to be proud: God humb himſelf, and doſt thou exalt thy ſelf? So o ſpeaks. And again elſewhere, *'Tis intolera Impudence* (ſays he) *that when Majeſty empti and humbles it ſelf, a vile Worm ſhould ſwe and be blown up with Pride.* O be humbl whatever your Attainments are: The mo humble you are, the more precious you are God's ſight; for, *he hath reſpect unto the low but beholdeth the proud afar off*, Pſalm. 138. Yea, *He reſiſteth the Proud*, He ſets himſelf Battel Array againſt the Proud, *James* 4. 6. *A rogate nothing to thy ſelf of theſe things that a in thee, but thy Sins; by ſo much the more precio thou art in God's Eyes, by how much the mo vile and deſpicable thou art in thine own Eyes* ſays *Bernard.* And to ſay no more, none mor ready to die than the humble and lowly Perſon; none more unready than the Proud and High-minded.

3. For a Man to be full and yet empty; Full of Enjoyments, and yet empty of the Love of the World; for a Man to enjoy an Affluence of this Worlds Good, a Fullneſs of all Creature-comforts and Contentments, and yet to be dead to all, and ſit looſe from all, placing his whole Happineſs in God and Chriſt; this is a choice, a noble, and excellent Strain of Grace indeed. We read of ſome, and but of ſome, in Scripture, who under an Affluence of outward Enjoyments, have been weaned from all, and ſat looſe from all, and have kept up their Communion with God, placing the whole Reſt and Happineſs of their Souls therein;

therein ; ſome ſuch (I ſay) we read of in Scripture, but truly they are but very few, and indeed 'tis both a rare and a difficult thing for a Soul thus to do: Theſe things eſpecially, when enjoyed in the fullneſs of them, are ſo apt to ingroſs the heart to themſelves, and to alienate it from God, and Communion with God, that 'tis indeed a very rare and difficult thing for a Man under an Affluence of them, to ſit looſe from them, and make God, and Communion with God, all in all to Him. 'Tis a great Saying which I have heard of a Learned Man, *Although Adverſity breaks many, yet Proſperity and fullneſs of Enjoyments kills many more: And how rare a Man is that, who in Proſperity does not, at leaſt a little in ſome degree or other, let down his Watch, and remit his ſtrictneſs and exactneſs in walking?* David *was a wiſe Man, and* Solomon *was a wiſer ; and yet both the one and the other diſcovered great Sin and Folly through abounding Proſperity.* So that, I ſay, 'tis both a rare and difficult thing ; but by how much the more rare and difficult it is, by ſo much the more excellent and eminent when attain'd. Oh for a Man to ſwim Chin-deep in the Streams of Creature-comforts, and yet not to forſake the Fountain of Living Waters: For a Man to have the Streams run pleaſantly on each hand of him, and yet to bath and delight only in the Fountain, as his Reſt and Happineſs ; for a Man in the height of Proſperity, to be able to ſay to God, as the Pſalmiſt in his Affliction did, Pſalm 73. 25, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there*

is none upon Earth I deſire beſides thee: This hu
noble Grace indeed: Oh labour to come *be*
to this, whatever your Worldly Enjoyme*nt in*
are, though never ſo Great, ſo High, ſo Pl*eaſ*
ſant; yet as ever you would be ready for *eternal*
Dying Hour, ſit looſe from all, die to *all*
the more dead we are to the World, and
more ready we are to go out of the World
A Worldly Spirit, a Spirit in love with the
World, is moſt unready for a Dying Hour
How can he be ready to leave the World, t
that is in love with the World? A Worldly
Spirit is moſt Odious to the Spirit of God
and moſt unſuitable to the future Life; and
one living in that Spirit, cannot be fit to enter
'Tis a great Saying I have read in one, and
is Perfect, whoſe Soul is alienated from who
World: But (ſays he) *that Soul is far from*
God, to whom this miſerable Life is Sweet: That
is to ſay, who is fond of theſe poor things
here. Oh die daily to the World under all
your Enjoyments of it, if you would indeed
ready to die.

3. For a Man to be Empty, and yet Full; to
to be deſtitute of all outward Comforts and
Enjoyments, and yet to want nothing, but that
be content, and to ſee all in God, and enjoy
all in God; for a Man to be afflicted and dis-
ſtreſſed, and yet at the ſame time ſee a Fulneſs
and Sufficiency of all Good and Happineſs in
a naked God, and naked Godlineſs, and ac-
cordingly to live up unto him, and reſt ſatisfied
fied in him; this is a noble Strain of Grace
indeed: This the Prophet, and in him the

Church

Thi hurch reſolved upon, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Although* ome *he Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit* oyme *in the Vine; the labour of the Olive ſhall fail,* ſo Pl *nd the Fields ſhall yield no Meat; the Flock ſhall* y fo *cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no* to a *erd in the Stalls.* Here you ſee is a moſt , nd Suppoſition, a moſt forlorn and deſtitute Wo ondition ſuppoſed to come: Well, and what th hen? In caſe all this come to paſs, what will Ho e Church do then? That the 18th Verſe tells Wo s, *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the* Vorl *od of my Salvation*; ſhe is reſolved to live up- f Go God, and delight her ſelf with God; ſhe ; ares enough in him alone, and ſets him and her to di tereſt in him, over-againſt all Wants, Loſſes, e, nd Afflictions. So the Apoſtles 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. *om* who were *as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all* r *hings*: They ſaw all in Chriſt, and enjoyed Thll in Chriſt. *Here* (as one gloſſes upon the thi place,) *we poſſeſs nothing, but do wander up and* er *down from place to place; yet poſſeſſing Chriſt, in* eed *him we poſſeſs all things.* Oh, for a Man to ee and enjoy all in Chriſt, when the World Full rowns upon him, and is low with him, this s ar a noble ſtrain of Grace; and let me ſay this, ut that 'tis an Argument that we have Carnal enjo Hearts, if we ſee not all in God; and enough d di God to ſatisfie and make us happy, whe- lne ther we have any thing or nothing of this ſs i World. Heaven, which Death ſends us to, if a we are indeed ready for it, is nothing elſe but ſati the viſion and fruition of God, for there he is ra all in all: And certainly, if we do not ſee thall in God now, and enough in God now,

we cannot ſuppoſe our ſelves to be ſo fully ready for Death and Eternity as we ought to be.

4. For a Man to have no Affliction, and yet to be deeply afflicted; to be wholly free from all perſonal Affliction, and yet greatly to lay to heart, and be afflicted for the Afflictions of God's Name and People, this is glorious Grace, Grace in Luſtre. 'Tis the Obſervation of a worthy Divine, that in the day of the Churches Trouble and Affliction, when both his Name and People do greatly ſuffer, God does ſometimes leave ſome of his People an Affluence of all outward good things; when others are ſtript of all their Comforts, they are full; when others are in ſtraits, they abound; neither is there any Cloud upon their Tabernacle. And this God does to try them, whether they will take up in their Enjoyments, and forget the Afflictions of his Name and People. And truly not to do ſo, but in ſuch a caſe to lay the Churches Afflictions to Heart, and to bleed and mourn with the bleeding Intereſt of God's Name and People, this is pure Grace and marvellous pleaſing to God. Such Grace ſome of the Saints have come up unto. Such Graces were found in *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 1. *And it came to paſs when the King ſat in his Houſe, and the Lord had given him reſt round about from all his Enemies, that the King ſaid unto* Nathan *the Prophet, See now I dwell in an Houſe of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within Curtains.* Mark, all was well with *David*, he had reſt, and he dwelt in a Houſe of

of Cedar; he had things ſuitable for and becoming a King: Ah, but all was not well with the Intereſt of God and his Worſhip: *David*'s Houſe and Intereſt proſpered; but it fared not ſo well with the Houſe and Intereſt of God; and therefore all his Enjoyments were as nothing to him, he ſo laid the Sufferings of God's Name and Worſhip to Heart. The like was found in *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. all things were well with him in his own Perſon: He was the King's Cup-bearer, and lived under the Enjoyment of an Affluence of all outward Contentments; and yet was in deep Affliction of Spirit, upon the account of the Churches Affliction: *When I heard theſe words*, (ſays he) Chap. 14. Theſe Words! What Words? Why, that the *Remnant that were left of the Captivity were in great Affliction and Reproach; that the Wall of* Jeruſalem *was broken down, and that the Gates thereof were burnt with Fire.* So Verſe 3. *Now when I heard theſe Words, I ſat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and faſted and prayed before the God of Heaven*; and in Chap. 2. beginning, *his Countenance*, 'tis ſaid, *was ſad* upon this account. O this was rare Grace, choice Grace! no perſonal Affliction, yet deeply Afflicted in, and with the Afflictions of the Church; ſo deeply afflicted, that all his perſonal Comforts, though great, were nothing to him. The like you find in *Daniel*, Chap. 10. 2, 3. Oh labour to come up to this Strain of Grace: It may be things are well with you, and you have all that Heart can wiſh; but if they are not ſo

with the Intereſts of God's Name and People, you ſhould be deeply afflicted for this, in the midſt of all your perſonal Comforts; and the more of this Spirit is in you, the more excellent your Grace is.

5. For a Man to ſubmit chearfully to, and acquieſce in the Will of God, when moſt ſharp and ſevere upon this outward Intereſt, this is a noble Strain of Grace. When God ſhall exerciſe a Man with rending tearing Diſpenſations, adding Sorrow to Sorrow to him, breaking him with Breach upon Breach, cauſing all his Waves and his Billows to go over him; and yet then for him quietly to acquieſce in, and chearfully to ſubmit to what God does, this is choice Grace: Such Grace was found in *Aaron*, *Lev.* 10. 3. God ſlew two of his Sons at once, and the Diſpenſation was attended with ſo many aggravating Circumſtances, as made it almoſt unparallel'd, not to be equall'd, ſo terrible was it; and yet under that great ſtroke, *Aaron held his Peace*, he ſubmitted freely, and acquieſced chearfully. The like was found in *Job*, when God had broken him all to pieces, he worſhips him, and bleſſes his Name, *Job* 12. 21, 22. And this was eminent in Chriſt himſelf, and was indeed his Crown and Glory; *Father, not my Will, but thy Will be done*, Mat. 26. 39. he freely ſubmits his Will to the Fathers, though he ſaw the Father coming forth againſt him in a moſt terrible Diſpenſation. Oh for a poor Soul to lie down at the foot of God, and to be ſo melted into his Will, as chearfully to bow to it, and acquieſce

quieſce in it under the ſharpeſt Diſpenſations; this is noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after this, this is very neceſſary to prepare us for a Dying Hour; and the more of this, the more ready for that Hour.

6. For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, and to think honourably of him when yet he frowns, and all things ſeem to make againſt the Soul: This is a noble Strain of Grace. Such Grace was found in *Abraham* who, 'tis ſaid, *againſt hope, believed in hope*; and ſo *was ſtrong in Faith*, Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20. when he had no encouragement; yea, when all things oppoſed him, yet then he maintained his Faith in God. So *Job* Chap. 13. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Oh to love a ſmiting God, and to truſt in a ſlaying God, this is noble Grace; for a Man to maintain the actings of his Faith in God, when he comes forth as an Enemy againſt him: This God calls for: He expects that *when we walk in Darkneſs, and ſee no Light, then we ſhould truſt in the Name of the Lord*; and ſo to do is noble Grace, *Iſa.* 50. 10, 11. Truly 'tis often times the caſe of God's People, that they walk in Darkeſs, and ſee no Light, all things ſeem to be againſt them. Poſſibly God Frowns and Afflicts; he Frowns within, and he Afflicts without: 'Yea, the poor Soul ſees nothing 'but Difficulties and Diſcouragements, look 'which way he will: He looks into his own 'Heart, and there he cannot find any one 'Grace or gracious Diſpoſition; he looks into 'the Word, and there perhaps he cannot ſee

'any one promiſe that he dares lay hol
'upon; he looks back for former Experience
'and they are all out of ſight; he runs t
'his Evidences, and they are all blotted tha
'he cannot read. Thus he is beſet with Dif
culties, and all things ſeem to make again
him both within and without; and yet now
when thus in the Dark, for the Soul to believ
in God, and think well and honourably
him, this is noble Grace indeed, this is Fait
in luſtre: To call Chriſt Lord, when he cal
us Dog, and to faſten by Faith upon him
when he is beating us off, as to ſenſe at leaſt
as 'twas with the Woman, *Mat.* 15. 26, 27, 2
this is glorious Grace: For a Man to thin
well, and hope well, and believe well, in th
Face of Frowns and Diſcouragements; for
Man, when God is frowning, and ſmiting, co
dially to ſay, this is but for a time, he wi
Smile again; he is but behind the Curtain, an
will appear again; his deſire is not to ruin m
but refine me: He is but making me to priz
his Grace and Preſence more; there is Lov
in all this. Oh for a Man to believe that ther
is Love in God's Heart, when he ſees nothin
but Frowns in his Face, and meets with no
thing hardly but blows from his Hand; for
Man to believe that God intends nothing bu
good, when he inflicts variety of vils, ſurel
this is glorious Grace: Oh that you would
labour for ſuch Grace! Such Grace will loo
Death in the Face with boldneſs. 'Tis a grea
Speech which Holy *Rutherford* hath, 'I lay
'Inhibitions on my Thoughts (ſays he) tha
'they

they receive no Slander of my only Beloved: Let him even ſay out of his own Mouth, there is no hope; yet will I die in that ſweet beguile; is it not ſo? but I ſhall ſee the Salvation of God, it is my Joy to believe under the Water, and to die with Faith in my Hand, griping of Chriſt. Beg ſuch Grace of God.

7. For a Man to ſee a Beauty and Excellency in Service, as well as in Enjoyment, in Work as well as in Reward, and accordingly to have his Heart lie in it: This alſo is noble Grace. Sirs, there is a Beauty and Excellency in Service; for a Man to be uſed and employed for God, and to act for him in the World, is the higheſt Honour and Excellency, (next to Union and Communion with him) that can be put upon a poor Creature: 'Twas the Honour of Chriſt, it is the Honour of Angels; Service is better than Enjoyment; *'Tis a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 53. Now when a Soul has anſwerable Thoughts and Apprehenſions about it, does practically and indeed ſee a Beauty and Excellency in Service for God, and accordingly is active for him, willing to be employed by him, and that though he has no Reward at preſent from him, this is noble Grace. This was found in *Paul*, *Unto me*, (ſaith he) *is this Grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Eph. 3. 8, He looked on't as an Honour, a Favour to be employed in the Work and Service of Chriſt. And again, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he accounted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry.*

Here he bleſſes Chriſt his Lord and Maſter for uſing him in his Work; yea, ſuch a Worth, Beauty and Excellency did he ſee in his Service, that he was content to ſtay out of Heaven, and the Boſom of Chriſt's Love where yet he earneſtly longed to be, that he might do further Service for Chriſt in this World. So you find, *Phil.* 1. 21, 22, 23. O for a Soul to long, and long earneſtly for Heaven, and the immediate Enjoyment of Chriſt there, and yet to be content to ſtay here in this ſinful, ſinning, troubleſom World, meerly to do ſome further Service for Chriſt, and to honour him yet in the diſcharge of his Work and Warfare, this is high Grace. This Holy *Rutherford* hath attained unto, he could under high Aſſurance of Heaven, be content to ſtay many Years out of it, to preach Chriſt. The ſame Mind dwelt in Chriſt himſelf, *Who went about doing good, making it his Meat and Drink to do his Fathers Will, and to finiſh his Work.* Oh when a Soul comes to this, then he is fit to live, and fit to die; when with that ancient Father, we come to ſay indeed, *What is it to live, and not to live for Uſe and Service?* When we value Life and Days in this World, no further than we are ſome way ſerviceable to Chriſt; this is growing Grace.

8. For a Man to rejoyce in the Gifts, Graces and Uſes of others, and that though they out-ſhine and eclipſe his: For a Man to rejoyce to ſee Grace flouriſhing in others, and to ſee the Work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide, and does not

ſhare

ſhare in the honour of it, this is pure Grace, Grace in luſtre. Such Grace was found in *Moſes*; *Envieſt thou for my ſake?* (ſaid he to *Joſhua*, who would have had him to forbid *Eldad* and *Medad* to propheſie in the Camp,) *Would God that all the Lords People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them*, Numb. 11. 29. He was ſo far from envying at them, that he wiſhes there were more of them. Such Grace was found alſo in *John* the *Baptiſt*, John 3. 26, 27, 30. he rejoyced in Chriſt's being owned and honoured, and flock'd unto, and in the increaſe of his Eſteem with Men, though to his own Abaſement. In *Verſe 26th*, ſome of *John's* Diſciples come and tell him, That *all Men come to Chriſt*; well ſays he, 'tis but his due; *Ver. 27. A Man can receive nothing, unleſs it be given him from Heaven: You your ſelves bear me witneſs that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt; and this my Joy is fulfilled, that he muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.* As if he had ſaid, 'Tis ſo far from being a trouble to me, that 'tis indeed the compleating of my Joy. Such Grace was found in *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 18. who rejoyced that Chriſt was Preached, though with a deſign to cloud and eclipſe him: *Chriſt is preached, and I therein do rejoyce; yea, and will rejoyce.* Some are apt to think 'twill be an Affliction to me (ſays he) that Chriſt is preached by any but my ſelf; whereas indeed this is ground of great Joy to me; I rejoyce, that though I cannot be permitted to preach Chriſt my ſelf, yet that ſo many others do preach him. And I remember a great Speech of

Luther, (arguing the ſame Grace to bein him writing to *Melanchon*, to comfort him under th Lets and Oppoſitions the Work and Cauſe God met withall in his time; the Cauſe of Go was oppoſed, and his Work obſtructed, in th ſenſe of which *Melanchon* was greatly trouble and dejected; and *Luther* underſtanding i writes an Epiſtle to him, to comfort and encou rage him, in which he has this Saying, 'God (ſaye he) 'is able to raiſe the Dead, and he 'able to ſupport his fallen Cauſe, and to rai 'it when fallen. If he ſhall not account 'worthy to be uſed therein, let him do it b 'others and make uſe of others. Mark, He w content the Work of God ſhould be done b others. There are Two things which I look upo to carry as pure and noble Grace in them, as an whatſoever: One is, to be willing to be uſed God's Work, without being taken notice of, having the Honour of it: The other is, for Man to rejoyce to ſee the Work of God carrie on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide, an has not the Honour to be uſed therein. O labour for ſuch Grace, Grace that will rejoy in the Gifts, Graces, Uſes and Succeſſes of other though you thereby are out-ſhined.

9. For a Man to have great Affection to th Name and Honour of God and Chriſt, and t think nothing too much to do, too hard to ſuffe or too dear to part withall for the Service an Advancement thereof, this is noble Grace When a Man hath high and paramount Affecti ons to the Name of God and Chriſt, loving an preferring of it infinitely before all his ow

Intereſt

Intereſts and Concerns, being ready to be, do, or ſuffer any thing for the Service of it. Oh what Grace is this! Such Grace ſome of the Saints have attained unto. *Lord* (ſays *Moſes* concerning *Iſrael*) *if thou wilt forgive their Sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou haſt written*, Exod. 32. 32. What is here meant by the Book which God had written, I ſhall not now ſtand to enquire or determine; but to be content to be blotted out of it, was to be ſure a great peice of Self-denial; and this *Moſes* deſired, you ſee, rather than that the People ſhould be utterly deſtroyed; and all becauſe he knew how much the Glory of God was concerned, and would ſuffer by their Deſtruction, as appears by comparing this Verſe with Verſe 12. The ſum (as one obſerves) is, 'That *Moſes* prefers the Glory of God before 'his own Salvation, whoſe Glory was con-'joyned with *Iſraels* Preſervation, in reſpect of 'the Promiſes made to the Fathers, and in re-'ſpect of the Blaſphemies which the *Egyptians* 'and other Adverſaries were ready to belch 'out againſt God, ſhould he deſtroy them. Such Grace was found alſo in *John Baptiſt*, in the place lately mentioned, *John* 3 latter end, who was content Chriſt ſhould raiſe himſelf out of his Abaſement. Such Grace was found in Chriſt, who preferred his Father's Glory before his own Life, *John* 22.27,28. Such Grace was found in *Paul, who was willing not only to be bound, but even to die for the ſake of Chriſt*. Acts 21. 13. for the Name, the Honour of Chriſt; Chriſt's Honour was ſo dear to him, that he could be

content

content to die to ſerve it, he preferred it before his Life. Oh my Beloved, when a Soul ſhall be ſo ſwallowed up with love and zeal for the Glory of God, and the intereſt of Chriſt in the World, as that his own Intereſts are in a manner overlook'd and forgotten by him; when to ſee the Name of God exalted, ſhall be a Man's greateſt Triumph; and to ſee it debaſed ſhall be his greateſt Trouble; when his practical Language ſhall be ſuch as this, Father, here I am; which way ſoever thy Glory lies, I am ready to ſerve thee in it; 'tis Honour enough for me to honour God; 'tis Happineſs enough for me to glorifie God; and therefore let God do with me, and let him call me to do whatever he will in order thereunto: Let him, if he pleaſes, eclipſe my Name, and throw my Glory in the Duſt, ſo be it he will thereby raiſe his own Name, and brighten his own Glory: Let him if he pleaſes, make me a Foot-ſtool, and let me be trampled upon, ſo be it he will advance himſelf into the Throne thereby: Let me die, if his Will be ſo, that his Glory may live: whatever becomes of me, though I ſhould be ſtripped of all, though my Name and Intereſt ſhould not, yet let God be magnified; let God have Honour in the World, and let the Intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt proſper, 'tis enough, I am ſatisfied. When I ſay, 'tis thus with a Soul, this ſpeaks noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after ſuch Grace; the more you love the Name of God and Chriſt, the fitter you are either to live or die.

10, For

10. For a Man not only to be willing to ſuffer, but alſo to rejoyce in Sufferings for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel, for a Man chearfully to take up the Croſs for Chriſt, and to look upon it as his Crown and Glory, as an Honour and Preferment to him, this is alſo a high ſtrain of Grace, and is greatly pleaſing to God. The Croſs, my Beloved, in it ſelf, *is a black ſowre Crab-tree*, (as one calls it;) but though ſuch in it ſelf, yet as 'tis born for the ſake of Chriſt, and ſo his Croſs, 'tis an Honour, and not a Reproach, a Crown of Glory, a Royal Diadem upon the Head of a poor Creature: *To you is given on the behalf of Chriſt, to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. 1. 29. Sufferings for Chriſt are Noble, Royal, Honourable Gifts, more Honourable than the Crowns and Kingdoms of this World: a Priſon for Chriſt is more Honourable than the ſtatelieſt Palaces of the greateſt Princes; Bonds for Chriſt, are more Honourable than Ropes of Pearl and Diamonds. Now when a Soul ſhall look on theſe things as ſuch, and accordingly rejoyce in them, this is Noble Grace indeed; Such Grace was found in the Diſciples, *Acts* 5. 41. *Who rejoyced*, (or as the Word is *leapt for joy*) *that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the Name of Chriſt*; or, as the words may be rendred, that they were honoured to be diſhonoured for Chriſt. So the Apoſtle and his Brethren, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in tribulation*; and, *I rejoyce*, (ſays *Paul*) *in Reproaches, Neceſſities and Perſecutions for Chriſt*; 2 Cor. 12. 10. So thoſe Worthies, Heb. 10, 34. *Who took joyfully the ſpoiling of their*

their Goods. This Chriſt calls for, Mat. 5. 12. *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad when Men perſecute you for my ſake.* And again, *Count it all Joy when you fall into divers Afflictions*, &c. *James* 1. 12. 'Tis admirable to think how ſome of the Saints, both in former and latter times, have gloried in the Croſs of Chriſt, and even longed for it. *Luther* longed for the Honour of Martyrdom, and was ready even to envy thoſe that were called unto it, when he was not; for writing to ſome of his Acquaintance in Bonds for Chriſt and the Goſpel, he breaks out into this Complaint; 'O miſerable 'me, who have been firſt in teaching theſe 'things; but laſt, and perhaps never worthy 'to be a partaker of your Bonds and Fires. Oh labour for ſuch Grace: We think it much if we be content to ſuffer; but we ſhould rejoyce in Sufferings, glory in the Croſs, carry our ſelves under Sufferings for Chriſt, as looking upon him to be (for ſo indeed they are) an Honour and Privilege unto us.

11. For a Man in a proſperous Condition, all things going ſmoothly with him in the World, to be willing to looſe Anchor, and be gone hence to Heaven; yea, for a Man to long, and long earneſtly for a Diſſolution, that he might be with Chriſt fully, and for ever with him, this is noble Grace. Sirs, take a Man whoſe Mountain of Proſperity ſtands ſtrong, whoſe Paths are as it were ſtrewed with Roſes, the Roſes of Creature-Contentments; who has all that Heart can wiſh of this Worlds Good, the Streams running pleaſantly

pleaſantly on each hand on him; for ſuch an one in ſuch a Condition to long, and long earneſtly to be gone to his dear Lord, that ſo he may be fully like him, and may ſee him as he is; that he may be eternally in his Preſence, ſwallowed up in the Love, Praiſes, and Admirations of him, be a perfect Partaker of his Life and Image, this is great and glorious Grace. When though a Man's Condition in the World be every way ſuch, as that he may well ſay, *It is good to be here*: Yet the daily pulſe of his Soul is that of the Spouſe, Cant. 8. 14. *Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices*; make haſte to fetch me hence to Heaven. This is noble Grace, and that which every one does not come up unto. Indeed when we are in Affliction, and our Lives are bitter unto us, by reaſon of many and great Trials, Difficulties and Temptations, then many are willing to be gone. But this is ſo far from noble Grace, that this may be where there is no Grace at all. But when the Sun ſhines upon our Tabernacle, and ſets not; when we live in a Paradiſe of earthly Comforts and Contentments; then to pant and long to be gone to be with Chriſt; then to ſuſpire and breath after the other World, and with an Holy Impatience to look out for it, this is glorious Grace, Grace that carries an Heavenly Odour and Savour with it. Thus I have mentioned ſome of thoſe more noble and excellent Strains of Grace for our Imitation, which I would have you to labour

to

to come up unto; and the more you come up to theſe, the more fit you are to live, and the more ready to die.

CHAP. X.

Wherein further Directions are laid down, in order to the ſetting things aright, and making him ready for a Dying Hour.

Seventhly. WOuld you indeed have all things right and in order, before a Dying Hour comes? Then be diligent and faithful in the Work of God, that Work which God in a particular manner hath given you to do: We have all our Work to do, and that given us from God; we have general work and ſpecial work.

Firſt, We have general work to do; the works of our Chriſtian Calling, the work of our Salvation, which we are commanded *to work out with fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. the work of Faith, and the labour of Love; the work of Mortification, Self-denial and the like. We have alſo,

Secondly, Special work to do, the work of our particular Stations and Places; work that is incumbent upon us, as we ſtand thus and thus related, being Magiſtrates, or Miniſters; the Maſters of Families, or the like: For all ſuch Relations bring their Work and Duty with them. And this indeed is properly our own work, and this we ſhould be diligent and faithful

faithful in, as ever we would be found ready for a Dying Hour. *Paul* had this work to do, and he was diligent and faithful in the Diſcharge of it; which gave him Comfort when he came to die, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, &c. He had been faithful in the diſcharge of his work while he lived; and being now to die, he found the comfort and ſweetneſs of it: Yea, this was that which our Lord himſelf comforted himſelf withal, when he was to die, and in the ſenſe of it goes to his Father with boldneſs for his Glory, John 17. 14. *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſhed the work wich thou gaveſt me to do.* Indeed he had a great deal of work given him by the Father, and he was faithful and punctual in the diſcharge of it all, which was a comfort to him now he was to die: And he himſelf tells us, *that is the bleſſed Servant, whom when his Lord ſhall come, he ſhall find ſo doing*; that is, faithful and diligent in the diſcharge of his proper Work, *Matth.* 24. 46. Truly this is the poſture which ſome, (though but few) are found in; they make Conſcience to diſcharge the Duty that is incumbent upon them; they ſay with their Lord, *I muſt work the Work of him that ſent me, while it is day: for the night cometh, when no Man can work*, *John* 9. 5. They ſee Night coming, Death coming, Judgment coming, Eternity coming; and accordingly

accordingly thy desire to lay out their who Souls in the Work of God, to live up to th Laws of Christ in every Relation; and the look upon that day as lost, wherein the have not done somewhat for God and the own Souls: And how comfortably may suc look Death in the Face when it comes! I hav read the Life of an Holy Minister, who w seized upon by Sickness, which was un Death, while he was Preaching the Eve lasting Gospel; and lying a few days Sick e he died, a fellow-Labourer of his, anothe Holy Minister, coming to visit him, and see ing Death in his Face, cried out in som Passion, *O dear Sir, are you going to Heaven fro us?* to whom he replied, *Yes, I bless God that my Master found me in his Work.* Truly might a Man have his Choice and Option, h would have Death to find him while he i engaged in the Work of God. Oh study your own Work: Study the Work and Duty of your Christian Calling: Study that Work and Duty which is incumbent upon you in your particular Relations, and beg of God a Heart to be diligent in the discharge of one and the other.

8. Would you indeed have all right, and in order in the maters of your Souls, e'er a Dying Hour comes? Then be suffer to suer no Distance or Estrangement to grow between God and you; but labour to keep up a constant and intimate Acquaintance with him, *Acquaint thyself with God, and be at Peace*, Job 22. 21 The more of an Holy Intimacy and Acquaintance with God

God we maintain the more we are at Peace with our ſelves: And I am ſure the more we are at Peace in our ſelves, the more ready we are for a Dying Hour. Wo and alas for us! How oft do we let fall our Converſe and Communion with God, and ſuffer ſad Diſtances and Eſtrangements to grow up between him and us? And indeed (my Beloved) it is a ſad and amazing thing to think how ſuddenly and imperceptibly Diſtances and Eſtrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul: For my own part, ſhould I have heard of it only by the hearing of the Ear, and had not found it by too many ſad and woful Experiences, I could not have believed how ſuddenly and imperceptibly Diſtances and Eſtrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul; yea and that after the neareſt, livelieſt, and moſt intimate Acquaintance and Communion with him; which calls upon us to be very Watchful and Circumſpect as to this thing: And (my Beloved) as you will die with Boldneſs and Comfort, let me adviſe and perſwade you to give all Diligence to keep up conſtant Incourſe and Acquaintance with God, and watch narrowly againſt all Diſtance between him and you. Which of us that knows any thing of the things of God, knows not, that we ſuffer Diſtances and Eſtrangements to grow up between God and us? We cannot tell how, with any tolerable Boldneſs and Comfort, to look him in the Face in a Duty, or ſcarce to think of him with Delight; much leſs ſhall we be able to look him in the Face with Comfort

comfort in Death, in caſe we ſuffer diſtances to grow up between him and us: Moreover, take this for a ſure rule, that the more you are verſed in Communion with God and do maintain an holy Intimacy and Correſpondence with him, the more boldneſs and comfort you will have when you come to die. Then you will be able to ſay, I am now going to be, and to live for ever immediately with that God with whom I have lived with much ſweet and intimate Communion here; I am now going to converſe more fully with him in Heaven with whom I have enjoyed much ſweet converſe here on Earth. Should Death find a Man under diſtances and eſtrangement between God and him, it muſt neceſſarily be uncomfortable unto him; but when there is an holy Intimacy kept up between God and the Soul, then the Soul need not fear, or be aſhamed to look Death and Judgment both in the face: *Little Children*, ſaith *John*, *abide in them, that when he ſhall appear, we may have boldneſs, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming*, 1 John 2. 28. We are put into Christ by Faith at our firſt Converſion; and we abide in him by after-Acts of Faith and Communion: And this abiding in him, is the way to have boldneſs before him at his coming. Therefore mind this, and pray much about this; take heed of diſtances growing up between God and you, and labour to have thoſe ſweet viſits, thoſe ſweet Intercourſes of Love, thoſe bleſſed Acts of Communion kept up between God and you, that are wont to be kept up

up between him and his watchful, close-walking Saints. And in order hereunto, take three or four short hints.

First. Look upon and esteem Converse and Commun on with God, to be (as indeed it is) your highest Happiness, both here and in Heaven; the highest Happiness Souls are capable of here, is to live in Converse and Communion with God in such ways as are suitable to this present State; and the highest Happiness Souls are capable of eternally in Heaven, is to live in the Divine Presence, and to see God's Face continually, and to lodge for ever in the Bosom of his Love. We may run out to a Thousand things, and when we have done all this will be the highest; and indeed the only Happiness of Souls, (*viz.*) To converse with God, and to enjoy Communion with God; and they that miss of this, will miss of all Hapiness for ever. Accordingly, we should prize it, and press after it; we should account all things as nothing on this side God, and Communion with God in Christ. The Saints of old have done so; *Many*, saith *David*, *will say, Who will shew us any Good? But, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us*, Psalm 4. 6. As if he should say, While others are seeking their Happiness from Carnal and Earthly Enjoyments, Corn, Wine, and Oyl, the Happiness we desire is thy Love, thy Favour, the Beamings out of the Light of thy Countenance upon our Souls. So *Psalm* 39. 7. *Now Lord, What wait I for? my Hope is in thee*; I have done with the Streams; as if he should say, and I desire

to

to cleave wholly to the Fountain: I have d
with the Creatures of which I have forme
been too fond, and I would now take up
whole Reſt, Solace and Satisfaction in thy
alone: And alſo, Pſal. 73. 25, 26. *Whom ha*
in Heaven but thee! And there is none in Ea
I deſire in compariſon of thee: My Heart
my fleſh faileth; but God is the ſtrength of
Heart, and my portion for ever. The ſame Sp
dwelt and acted in *Auſtin.* 'All Fullneſs a
'Plenty (ſaith he) which is not my God, is W
'and Poverty: And again elſwhere, 'Th
'Lord, art my God, my Happineſs; and u
'thee, and after thee, do I breath and ſuſpire D
'and Night. O (my Beloved) did we inde
prize Communion with God more, we ſho
live more in Communion with him. And t
take for a certain Truth, that it will never
well with us indeed, till we ſee all in God, a
account we enjoy all Happineſs, in enjoy
Communion with him.

Secondly, In the cloſe of every day, ta
a ſerious View of, and diligently conſider wh
hath paſſed between God and you, what Tra
actions there have been between God a
your Souls that day: There doth not a d
paſs, wherein there do not many things p
between God and his People; and he that wo
prevent Diſtances and Eſtrangments betwe
God and him, ſhould ſeriouſly ponder and l
to Heart what hath paſſed between God a
his Soul, what Tranſactions there have be
between God and him that day. On the o
hand, ponder and conſider what hath paſſe
fro

om God to you, and what his Carriage to-
ards you hath been, what Approaches he
th made to you, what Intimates of Love,
hat Overtures of Communion, what Disco-
ries of himself and his Glory; how far and
what way God hath been dealing with
ur Spirits, convincing, enlightening, quick-
ng, or comforting of them; what Calls he
th given you, what Myrrh he hath dropped
on the handle of the Lock, what tastes
u have had of his Sweetness and Grace,
hat Holy Impressions he hath made upon
u, and the like. On the other hand, ponder
d consider what hath passed from you to
od, and what your Carriages towards him
ve been; what Acceptation and Entertain-
ent you have given him, making his Ap-
oaches to you; what value you have put
on his Presence, and the Intimations of
s Love; how far you have embraced and
nproved the Overtures he made you of far-
er Communion with him; what Awe there
th been upon you of his Holiness, and his
ll-seeing Eye; what Out-goings of Heart
ere have been found within you after him;
hat Breathings of Love, what Holy Long-
gs and Desires, what Springings and Work-
gs of Spiritual Joy, and Delight of Soul to
m, and in him; what place he hath had in
ur Thoughts and Contemplations; how far
u have lived to him and upon him; where-
you may have either grieved or delighted
s Spirit, and the like. Thus in the close of
very day, ponder and consider what hath

passed

paſſed between God and you, and accordingly deport and demean your ſelves before him. Wherein you have failed or been defective in any thing in order to keeping up Communion between God and you, be humbled, and ſet all right by Faith and Prayer; adore God in his Acts of Grace and Condeſcention (as to be ſure you will find cauſe ſo to do) and loath your ſelves, for any Acts of Sin or Unkindneſs, Undutifulneſs, or diſreſpect that you have been guilty of towards God: O this would be a bleſſed Courſe indeed, to prevent Diſtances and Eſtrangements between God and you. This *David* calls *a Communion with his own Heart*; and enjoyns it as a Duty of the higheſt Importance; *Stand in awe and ſin not, commune with your Hearts and be ſtill*, Pſal. 4. 4. It is what he lived in the Practice of, *Pſal.* 77. 6. (if he was the Author of that Pſalm, *I communed with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent ſearch.* O be punctual in this work.

Thirdly, Be much Converſant, and that with all Spiritual Diligence in the Ways and Duties of Communion; thoſe Ways and Duties wherein God is wont to meet his People and maintain Converſe and Communion with them; and in all of them wait for God and his Approaches to you. There are thoſe which we may call Ways and Duties of Communion, Ways and Duties wherein God and his People do hold Converſe with each other, wherein God viſits and communicates himſelf unto his People, and wherein his People may be ſaid

to viſit God; and make out after God, and theſe are the uſe of the Word and Sacraments, the exerciſe of Prayer, Meditation, Self-examination, and the like: Now as ever you would prevent the growing up of Diſtances and Eſtrangements between God and you, ſee that you are much converſant in theſe, and that with an holy and ſpiritual Diligence, waiting for God, and the Manifeſtations of God to your Souls in them; theſe are the Galleries wherein Chriſt and his People do take ſweet turns together: The green Beds wherein they lie down in the Boſom of each others Love: Therefore keep up a conſtant and diligent Attendance in God in theſe. And in all your Attendances on him, look after converſe with him, let it be your ſolemn aim to converſe with him, and ſee his Face, to have a Viſit, a Smile, a deſcent of Love from him. I do ſuppoſe you to be ſuch as do and will attend on Publick Ordinances, and wait for God there, as they waited for the Spirit at *Jeruſalem*: That only then which I would preſs you to, in this preſent caſe, ſhall be, to be much converſant in Prayer and Meditation between God and your own Soul; in theſe two great Duties of Communion with God, ſecret Prayer and Meditation: Oh the loſs as to Communion with God, that we expoſe our ſelves unto by being no more in Prayer, and holy Meditation! The holy ones of old, and thoſe that have been Men of the higheſt Communion with God, have alſo been Men of much Prayer, and great Meditation; as I might inſtance

in *David*, *Daniel*, and others: And indeed, their Communion with God came in and was kept up this way. God (you know) hath told us, *The Prayer of the Upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8. And Chriſt beſpeaks the Prayer of his Spouſe, as moſt pleaſing and Delightful to him, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my Dove! Thou art in the clefts of the Rock, in the ſecret places of the Stairs; Let me ſee thy Countenance, and hear thy Voice, for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely*; as if he ſhould ſay, approach to me in ſecret Prayer, I will aſſure thee it will be moſt ſweet and pleaſant unto me. And as he thus delights in the Prayers of his People; ſo he will ſurely delight them in their Prayers with the Viſits of his Love, and Communications of his Grace, the beamings out of his Glory to, and upon their Souls; he hath promiſed to *make them joyful in his Houſe of Prayer*; yea, he hath promiſed to perform the whole Grace of the new Covenant in anſwer to their Prayers, *Ezek.* 36. 37. Oh the great things God doth for his People, and the ſweet Communion that is kept up between him and them, in a way of Prayer! I remember a Saying of one, *He that is not much in Prayer, will never be a Man of much Excellency*: And I may as truly ſay, He that is not much in Prayer, is not like to be a Man of much Communion with God. And ſo for Meditation: Oh how Sweet how Heaven-like a Duty is that! Oh how much of God is let out many times to the Souls of his People herein! *David* experienced this, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with Marrow and*

Fatneſs,

Fatneſs, and my Mouth ſhall Praiſe thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watches: While he was converſant in this Duty of Meditation, his Soul was filled with Joy and Satisfaction, as with Marrow and Fatneſs. Again, ſaith he, *My Meditation of thee ſhall be ſweet*, Pſalm 104. 34. Oh be much and frequent with God in theſe Ways and Duties of Communion.

Fourthly, Give Chriſt his due Place and Honour, in all your makings out after Communion with God. *Joſeph* told his Brethren, *They ſhould not ſee his Face, unleſs they brought their Brother* Benjamin *with them*: And truly you are not like to ſee the Face of God in any of the forementioned Ways and Duties, unleſs you bring Chriſt with you, and give him his due Place and Honour therein; that is to ſay, unleſs you eye him, and act Faith upon him, as the only way and *medium* of Communion with God: Chriſt beſpeaks this at our hands, while he tells us, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life? no Man cometh to the Father but by me*, John 14. 6. and by his Blood it is, that we have a way opened to us into the Holy of Holies, acceſs for our Perſons and Prayer into the Divine Preſence (*Heb.* 10. 19, 20.) yea, not only as he purchaſed a Liberty, and opened a way for us to approach into the Preſence of God: But having done this, by his Mediation and Interceſſion it is that any of us come to God: Hence he is ſaid *To ſave to the very uttermoſt all that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make Interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 25. Indeed, were it not for Chriſt,

none of us could ever hope to ſee the Face o
God, and live; none of us could ever hope t
ſee one ſmile of God's Face, one Embrace o
his Boſom, any the leaſt Deſcent and Emana
tion of Love from him: Were it not for Chriſt
when we come unto God, we ſhould find him t
be a conſuming Fire, and when he and our Soul
did meet, it would be as the meeting of devour
ing Fire, and withered Stubble. In a word, a
Communication of Grace and Love from God t
us, are by and through Chriſt; and all the Love
the Duty, the Homage we render to God, muſt
be all tender'd to him by and through Chriſt, i
ever we find Acceptance with him. Have Chriſt
therefore in your Eye in all your Approaches un
to God, as to him, *by whom we have acceſs to the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. Let the real Language of your
ſouls be, If I have any one ſmile from God, it muſt
be upon the account of Chriſt; if he ſheweth him
ſelf pacified towards me, it muſt be through his
Blood; if he gives out any Grace, any Favour,
any Bleſſing to me, it will be upon the ſole ac
count of his Mediation; if ever either my Per
ſon or Services be accepted of the Lord, it muſt
be in and through this Mediator. Moreover, how
great ſoever the diſtance between God and my
Soul is, yet Chriſt can bring me nigh unto him;
and however unworthy of, or unſuitable to Com
munion with God I am in my ſelf, yet ſuch is
his well-pleaſedneſs in Chriſt, that well-beloved
Son of his, that I will hope through him to find
Grace in his ſight, and to be lodg'd in the Boſom
of his Love. Thus put all the Honour upon
Chriſt, that is due to him in this Buſineſs;

this

this is what is pleaſing to the Father: And the more you thus honour him, the fuller and more conſtant will your Converſe and Communion with God be.

Ninthly, Would you indeed have all right and in order for a Dying Hour? Would you be ready for that laſt and great Work? Then live wholly and conſtantly upon Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs for your Juſtification and Acceptation with God, both living and dying. The more we live out of our ſelves upon Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, for Juſtification and Acceptance with God, the more ready poſture we are in for a Dying Hour: This indeed is the main thing; and when we have done all that ever we can to deck and adorn our ſelves with Grace and glorious Diſpoſitions, ſtill we muſt live out of our ſelves, and out of all thoſe Ornaments, upon the naked Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for Juſtification and Salvation. This is that which the Scripture calls the readineſs of the Lambs Wife, *Rev.* 19. 7, 8. *Let us be glad and rejoyce, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her ſelf ready.* And wherein that readineſs lay, the next words will tell you: *To her was granted to be cloathed with fine Linen, clean and white, which fine Linen is the Righteouſneſs of the Saints,* that is, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to the Saints through believing: This is the *beſt Robe*, mentioned *Luke* 15. 22. a Robe indeed which covers all our Nakedneſs, that beautifies and adorns us and renders us moſt amiable in God's Eye,

Whatſoever Spots and Blemiſhes, whatever Failings and Defects may be upon us, yet theſe are not ſeen, while God looks upon us as cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of his Son, and we by Faith do live upon that Righteouſneſs as the ſole Matter of our Juſtification and Acceptance with him: And let me tell you, the more clear and diſtinct the actings of our Faith are, in carrying us out of our ſelves, and all Self-righteouſneſs, and relying wholly on Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, the more ready and comfortable Poſture we are in for a Dying Hour. This was the great thing *Paul* coveted and preſſed after to the very laſt, and which he accounted all things but Dung for: *Phil.*3.8,9. *I count all things but Dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having my own Righteouſneſs, which is by the Law, but the Righteouſneſs of Faith, the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith.* He dreaded the thoughts of being found in any thing of his own; he trembled to think of ſtanding upon his own bottom, the bottom of his own Worth and Righteouſneſs, when he ſhould come to die, and be cleaved intirely unto, and relied wholly upon Chriſt, and his moſt perfect Righteouſneſs. Oh let me tell you, *Paul* had as much, and perhaps more, to have reſted upon, than ten thouſand of us; for Gifts, for Graces, for Privileges, for Services, for Succeſſes, for Sufferings for Chriſt, he went beyond any meer Man that ever lived; and *Chryſoſtom* obſerves of him, That he feared nothing but Sin; to diſpleaſe God, and to diſhonour him, was the only thing that was terrible

to

to him; and the Scripture gives a large and frequent account of his other Attainments: But ſtill he goeth out of all, and his Language is, None but Chriſt! None but Chriſt! Not but that he alſo preſſeth after the greateſt Eminency and Exactneſs in Holineſs, as you find in the following Verſes of this third to the *Philippians*: And indeed, this is the true Spirit of the Goſpel, to preſs after the greateſt Eminency and Exactneſs in Holineſs; to covet to attain, if poſſible, unto Angelical Holineſs, and yet under, and after all, to live ſingly and entirely on a naked Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs for Juſtification and Acceptance with God; and the more you come to, and live in this Spirit, the more ready you are for Death, and a bleſſed Eternity. This was a great part of the ground of the Churches rejoycing, *Iſa.* 63. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with the Garments of my Salvation, and hath covered me with a Robe of Righteouſneſs*; which *Chryſoſtom*, and others both Ancient and Modern, interpret of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: And indeed no greater ground of rejoycing to a Man or Woman, whether living or dying, than to be cloathed with the Robe of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: I ſhall only put you in mind of a Saying I have heard from an holy Man, the day before he died: *My Friends* (ſaith he, ſpeaking to my ſelf and others) *I have walked with God theſe thirty Years, and have enjoyed a good meaſure of the Aſſurance of his Love: But now that I am come to die, I do not place my Comfort*

on any of all theſe, but on the infinite Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt. Oh there, there, when we have done all, we muſt lay the weight and ſtreſs of our Souls, Comfort, Salvation, and all: And therefore be ſure you live out of your ſelves upon Chriſt. It is a great Saying *Luther* hath to this purpoſe, *Lord Jeſus* (ſaith he) *thou art my Righteouſneſs, and I am thy Sin: Thou tookeſt mine,* (meaning his Sin) *and thou gaveſt me thine,* (meaning his Righteouſneſs) *thou tookeſt that which thou waſt not, and thou gaveſt me that which I was not*; intending the exchange that Chriſt had made with him, giving him his Righteouſneſs for his Sin. Oh let this be the Language of our Souls to Chriſt, ſo ſhall we be found ready when a Dying Hour comes.

Tenthly, Would you indeed die with comfort? Then beg God to ſtand by you, and give you actual Grace in a Dying Hour; and make it one of your great Works to treaſure many Prayers for this before-hand: When you have done all, ſhould God withdraw his Preſence, and the Influences of his Grace and Love from you when you come to die, Death would be in a great meaſure uncomfortable to you: But if God will be with you, if God will ſtand by you, if he will vouchſafe you the Influences and Communications of his Grace in a Dying Hour, then how will your Souls triumph over Death? This indeed will ſweeten Death: They are great words of *David* in *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of Death, I will fear no evil;*

evil; for thou art with me; Having the Preſence of God with him, he was not, he would not be afraid, even in the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. Truly, without the Preſence of God we cannot live comfortably; whatſoever our Attainments in Grace have been, yet if God withdraw his Preſence from us, we can do nothing, we can bear nothing, we cannot perform the leaſt Duty, we cannot reſiſt the leaſt Temptation, we cannot grapple with the leaſt Corruption, nor carry through, as we ought, the leaſt Difficulty; much leſs ſhall we be able to die with Comfort, if God withdraw; therefore, I ſay, beg God to ſtand by you in a Dying Hour: Let it be your daily Prayer to God,

Firſt, That he would be with you in the Difficulties of Life.

Secondly, That he would not leave you in the Conflicts and Agonies of Death. And indeed we ſhould not paſs that day, wherein we do not treaſure up one Prayer for this before-hand; and thus doing, God will not leave us, God will not fail us in that laſt and great Difficulty; at leaſt he will not leave us in point of Grace; our Lord himſelf was left in the Agonies of Death by the Father, in point of Comfort, which put him to that out-cry, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* But he was not left by him in point of Grace, ſtill a Spirit of Faith and Holineſs acted him; and therefore tho forſaken, he cries out, *my God, my God.* If poſſibly in conformity to our Head, we ſhould be left in that hour in point of Comfort, yet if we carry our ſelves as we ought, we ſhall

not be left in point of Grace; and if we be not left in point of Grace, all will do well, though not ſo Sweet and Joyous with us as otherwiſe it would be. And thus I have given you theſe more particular Directions, in order to a Preparation for a Dying Hour; which if you live up to, you may not only live above the fear of Death, but alſo in the joyful Expectation thereof daily.

CHAP. XI.

Being a Conſolatory Concluſion of the whole Diſcourſe, containing Encouragements againſt the Fear of Death, unto all ſuch as are found in the Practice of the foregoing Directions.

NOW for a Concluſion of the whole matter. Upon all that hath been declared, Soul, let me ask thee one queſtion: Doſt thou indeed ſee thy particular Concern in this buſineſs? So ſee, as really to make it thy great Work and Solicitude while living, to ſet all things right, and make all things ready for a Dying Hour? Some there are that are ſo happy as ſo to do; and art thou one of them? Then why ſhouldſt thou fear Death? Yea, why ſhouldſt thou not exult, and thy Heart leap within thee in the ſight and thought of its approach? True, its a dark entry, but it leads to a fair and ſtately Palace, even the Fathers

Father's Houſe: 'Tis a rough and difficult Paſſage, but it ſets thee ſafe on ſhore in a large and fat Land: True, it carries with it ſomewhat a black lowring, and gaſtly Aſpect to Nature; and Nature may at firſt poſſibly be ſtartled and recoil at the ſight of it; but open the Eye of thy Faith, and behold it in the Glaſs of the Goſpel; view it in the Death of thy Lord and Head, and it will not appear half ſo terrible; yea, thou wilt find it to be not ſo much an Enemy as a Friend, not as a King of Terrors, but rather as a King of Comforts; not as an object to be dreaded and trembled at, but rather to be rejoyced in, and triumphed over by thee; it will appear to be no loſs, but gain: *For me to die is gain,* ſays *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. yea, it will be thy great gain, 'twill be the period of all thy Miſery, and the perfecting of all thy Happineſs; and the truth is, we are never perfectly Happy till Death comes. But for thy further encouragement, I ſhall in a few particulars ſhew you what Death, come when it will, doth and will do for ſuch as make all ready for its coming.

1. Death, when-ever it comes, will tranſlate thee, thou ready Soul, from Earth to Heaven, from a ſtrange Land to thine own Home, and Father's Houſe; and will not this be a kindneſs? As for this World, what is it to the poor Saints, but a ſtrange Land? 'Tis Heaven is their Home and Country: Hence they have confeſſ'd, and do *confeſs themſelves to be Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, Heb. 11. 13.

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and

and the *Pſalmiſt*, in the words immediately foregoing my Text, *Pſalm* 39. 12. owns it to God, *I am a Sojourner, and a Stranger here*: Yea, this World is not only a ſtrange Land, but a waſte howling Wilderneſs to ſuch, wherein they live among wild Beaſts, Lions, Bears, Wolves, Tigers, and the like; Luſts within, and Devils without, ready daily to devour them; but now when Death comes, that carries them off from this ſtrange Land, this waſte howling Wilderneſs, to their own Home and Country, which is in Heaven; yea, to their Father's Houſe, there to live with him, to enjoy his Preſence, and to adore his Grace, *We know*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle* (ſpeaking of the Body) *ſhall be diſſolved, we have a Building with God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. And you know how Chriſt ſpeaks to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions: If it were not ſo, I would have told you*; and thither does Death carry you when it comes. Oh ſweet, Oh my Beloved, to go home, to go to our Father's Houſe, and to poſſeſs our Manſion there, that Manſion which our dear Lord and Head is gone before to prepare for us, how ſweet is this to think of! And how many Deaths may it ſweeten! Suppoſe one of you were ſome thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home, Country and Comforts, and you were in a waſte howling Wilderneſs, among Lions and Bears, ready to devour you; a wide Sea alſo being between home and you; and ſuppoſe withal that a Ship

ſhould

ſhould come and take you into her, and in a ſhort time ſet you down in your own Country, and among all your Friends and Comforts, would not this be a Kindneſs? Why this is your caſe here, O ye preparing Souls, and this is the Kindneſs Death does for you when it comes; while here, you are Ten Thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home and Country, your Friends and Comforts, and in a waſte howling Wilderneſs; but Death that ſwift Sailer comes, and in a Moment ſets you down in Heaven, your Home and Country: O how welcome ſhould it then be to you!

2. Death, when-ever it comes, will carry thee from Trouble to Reſt, from a tempeſtuous Sea to a quiet Haven; there to lie at an Anchor in the Boſom of thy ſweet Lord. This World ever was, and (for any thing I know) ever will be, a place of trouble to the People of God: Sure I am, Chriſt hath told us, *In the World you ſhall have Tribulation*, John 16. 33. And who of us does not find it made good? This World a is Tempeſtuous Sea, wherein the Waves lift up themſelves; and the poor Saints are *afflicted and toſſed with Tempeſts*, and oftentimes *not comforted*, Iſa. 54. 11. We read in *Jonah* 1. 13. that *the Sea wrought and was tempeſtuous, and the Mariners were fain to row hard to get the Ship to ſhore.* And truly, thus 'tis often in the caſe in hand, the Sea of this World is tempeſtuous, it works, and the poor Saints are fain to row hard to get ſafe to ſhore; yea, as we read *Acts* 27, 14, that *an Euroclydon, a tempeſtuous Eaſt-wind*

wind aroſe, and beat upon Paul, *and others in the Ship with him*, which was ready to break all in pieces! So truly the Saints in this World do meet with *Euroclydons*, Tempeſtuous Winds not a few, which beat upon them, and are ready to ſplit all, and ſink all; and now when Death comes, thoſe Storms are all made a Calm, and they (I mean the Saints) are brought into the deſired Haven: Death ſets them at reſt; *There* (ſays *Job*, ſpeaking of the Grave) *the weary are at reſt*, Job 3. 17. Death ſends the Body to reſt, it frees it from all ſenſible Sufferings: When Death comes, thy weak Body, thy ſick Body, thy pained Body, thy conſumptive Body, ſhall have its diſmiſſion to reſt: And Death ſends the Soul to Reſt, that Reſt in God and with God: *Bleſſed are the Dead which die in the Lord, henceforth they reſt from their Labours*, Rev. 14. 13. and you have, I think, both together in one Scripture, *Iſa.* 57. 2. where, ſpeaking of the Righteous, 'tis ſaid, *They ſhall enter into Peace, they ſhall reſt in their Beds.* Hence we read, that *there remaineth a reſt unto the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Indeed it remains, 'tis not here; but when Death comes, that ſets them down in this remaining Reſt. O what a kindneſs muſt this be? Reſt! O how ſweet is Reſt! How deſirable is Reſt? and Reſt too after long and hard labour and trouble? How ſweet is Reſt to the labouring Man, that hath wrought hard all the day? How ſweet is Reſt to the weary Traveller, that hath gone a long and dirty Journey? How ſweet is Reſt to the ſolicitous Mariner,

Mariner, and how welcome is the Harbour to him, eſpecially after having been long toſt and beaten with Storms and Tempeſts? And how ſweet will Reſt be to the Poor, troubled, tempted, labouring, travelling Saint, whoſe whole Life has been little elſe but Trouble, Labour, and ſore Travel; who here could ſcarce all his days find a reſting-place for the Soal of his Foot, the World as to him being covered with a Deluge?

3. Death, when-ever it comes, will turn your Conflicts into Victory; this *Aceldama*, or Field of Blood (for ſuch is the World) into a Mount of Triumph, and a Throne of Glory. What is this World but an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood to the poor Saints? Sure I am, this Life is little elſe but a perpetual War and Conflict with Luſts, with Devils, with Afflictions, and with Temptations; hence 'tis called *a Fight*, *a Warfare*, and the like: And the Enemies which they in this Warfare are to grapple with are formidable Enemies: *We wreſtle not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *with Fleſh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedneſſes*, Eph. 6. 12, 13. We wreſtle not with Fleſh and Blood, that is, with Men, or any thing that is frail and weak; no, we have more potent and formidable Enemies to deal withall; we wreſtle and conflict with Devils, who are potent, ſubtil and indefatigable. *Enemies* (as *Calvin* obſerves upon the place) *which wound before they appear, and kill before they are ſeen; Enemies which deal not only by Force and Power, but who*

are

are Dreadful, Crafty and Subtle, yea, Enemies which have fiery Darts to caſt at us, as afterwards he ſpeaks. And for my own part, I think it were well for us, over what it is, if theſe were the worſt Enemies we had to grapple and conflict with; but there are Legions of Luſts within (which I look upon to be worſe Enemies) which we do and muſt wreſtle with; (inteſtine Enemies are in many reſpects the worſt) theſe *war againſt our Souls*, 1 Pet. 2.11. and were it not for theſe, all the Devils in Hell could do us no hurt. Thus this Life is to the Saints a Warfare, a Conflict; and O the Wounds, the Bruiſes, the Bloodſhed which they are expoſed to in this War! Now their Peace, and then their Grace; now their Comforts, and then their Conſciences are ſorely wounded, and they lie Bleeding for Days, and Weeks, and Months together; yea, ſometimes like him that was travelling from *Jeruſalem* to *Jerico*, they were wounded and left half dead, and did not the good *Samaritan* paſs by, taking Compaſſion on them, and pour in of his Wine and Oyl, his Blood and Spirit, into their Wounds, they would ſoon be wholly dead: Well, but now when Death comes, that puts an end to this War, and ſets them all down upon a Throne of Triumph: *To him that overcometh* (ſays Chriſt) *will I grant to ſit with me upon my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father on his Throne*, Rev. 3.21. When Death comes, then you begin an eternal Triumph with Chriſt; then the Palm will be put into your Hands,

Hands, and you ſhall triumphantly cry Victory, Victory for ever. O how ſweet will this be! How ſweet is the Victory to a Soldier that has been long and hard put to it in the Battel! And indeed, the harder the Battel, the more glorious the Triumph. 'Tis a ſweet and great Saying which I have read in *Auguſtine* to this purpoſe, *The Conqueror*, ſaith he, *Triumphs*; *and unleſs he had fought, he had never conquered*: *And by how much the greater his Danger and Difficulty was in the Battel, by ſo much the greater is his Joy in the Triumph.* O Sirs, not only will Death ſet you upon a Mount of Triumph, but know for your Encouragement, the ſharper your Conflicts and Warfare have been here, the more glorious will your Triumph be, when Death ſhall ſet you upon the Throne.

4. Death, when-ever it comes, will change your Bondage into Liberty, your Spiritual Thraldom into glorious Freedom; and is not this a kindneſs? Poor Soul, one thing here which thou bleedeſt and groaneſt under, is that Spiritual Bondage and Thraldom which thou lieſt under: And indeed, this World is no other than a Priſon, a Dungeon, an Houſe of Bondage to thee, the Land of thy Captivity: Here thou lieſt in Chains and Fetters, the Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt; yea, and the Iron ſometimes enters into thy Spirit. Hence we read of *the Bondage of Corruption*, which indeed is the ſoreſt Bondage in the World, a worſe Bondage ten thouſand times, than that which *Iſrael* groaned and

and ſighed under in *Egypt*, *who* yet *were made to ſerve with rigour, and whoſe Lives were made bitter with hard Bondage*, Exod. 1. 13, 14. Truly this Luſt, and the other Luſt, this Corruption, and the other Corruption, are as ſo many *Egyptians*, cruel Task-maſters, which make thee ſerve with rigour, and thy Life bitter to thee with hard Bondage; and how doſt thou groan and ſigh under the Bondage of a proud, dead, hard, carnal unbelieving Heart, an Heart bent to backſliding from God! And indeed, who that is ſenſible of it, can but groan under it? This drew that heavy Groan from *Paul*, and bitter Out-cry, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am!* ſays he, Why *Paul*, what's the matter? Oh, ſays he, *I find a Law in my Members, warring againg the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death.* I am by Sin brought into Captivity to Sin, and I have a Body of Sin and Death lying heavy upon me, heavier than a Mountain of Braſs or Iron; and who can but groan? And as 'twas with him, ſo 'tis with all the Saints in their meaſure. Well, but when Death comes, Sirs, that will turn all this your Bondage into Liberty, yea, into the *glorious Liberty of the Children of God.* Rom. 8. 21. that will turn again this your Captivity: And O how ſweet will that be? You have ſome little taſtes of this Liberty here; *for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. and the taſtes of it are Sweet, very Sweet; but O how ſweet will be the full Enjoyment on't be? *Paul* breaks out into Praiſes in the Faith

Faith of it before-hand, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. 7. 25. O Soul, how ſhould this make thee long for Death? Can a Priſon, can a Houſe of Bondage, can a State of Thraldom be pleaſant to thee? Canſt thou be well pleaſed to lie in Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt? Shouldſt thou not rather welcome that which alone would work thy Deliverance?

5. Death, when-ever it comes, will be the Death of all your Sins, and the Perfection of all your Graces; and will not that be a kindneſs? Poor Saint, how doſt thou here Bleed and Groan under the Senſe of the Life and Vigour of thy Sins on the one hand, and of the Weakneſs and Imperfectiom of thy Graces on the other hand? Yea, how great are Conflicts and holy Contentions of thy Spirit to kill and bring down the one, and to quicken and perfect the other? How doſt thou, with the holy Apoſtle of old, *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, follow after, that thou mayeſt apprehend that for which alſo thou art apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus, preſſing towards the mark*, &c. Phil. 3. 12. 13, 14. Oh the Watchings, the Warnings, the Wreſtlings of thy Soul for more Grace, more Holineſs, more Victory over, and cleanſing from Sin! Oh the many Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans that thou poureſt out between God and thy Soul, in order hereunto! Theſe things are the buſineſs of the Life; yea, and after all, Sin is ſtill ſtrong and lively, and Grace is ſtill weak and imperfect; the Senſe of which breaks thy Heart almoſt, and makes

makes thee go mourning all the day long: What, daily cleanſing thy ſelf, and yet ſtill unclean? Daily perfecting Holineſs, yet ſtill imperfect? Oh how ſad is this? Well but Soul, when Death comes, things will be ſtrangely alter'd with thee; that will do that for thee in one moment, which thou by a whole Life of Prayers, Tears, Faith, Watching, Warring, Labouring, couldſt not do; 'twill make thee perfect: Hence thoſe above are ſaid to be ſo, *The Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. Then *all that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect ſhall come*, 1 Cor. 13. 10. perfect Grace, perfect Holineſs. Now there is much lacking in thy Faith, thy Love, thy Obedience, thy Humility, thy Heavenlineſs, thy Joy and Delight in God; but Death when it comes, will make up all in a moment: Yea, now thou art ſtained and defiled with Sin, and this Luſt, and the other Luſt ſtirs, and works, and wars with thee; but when Death comes, that will purge away all: Death is the Saints only perfect cleanſer through Chriſt. Indeed 'tis ſaid of wicked Men and Hypocrites, that *their Iniquity ſhall lie down with them in the Duſt*, Job 20. 11. which is a dreadful Word indeed; Death does not kill their Sins, no, they live in the Grave; they go with them into the other World, and will there live in them for ever, which will be a great part of their Torment: 'Twill be indeed (however they may now think of it,) the one half of Hell; for what is Hell, but Sin at the higheſt, and Wrath

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at the hotteſt? But though it be thus with wicked ones, yet 'tis otherwiſe with the Saints; Death, through the Grace of Chriſt, will for ever put a period to your Sin, and perfect your Graces. Oh ſweet! who would not welcome Death!

6. Death, when-ever it comes, will ſet thee above all afflictive diſtances between God, Chriſt, the Comforter, and thee, and will ſet down thy Soul in the full, conſtant, and immediate Viſion and Fruition of all for ever; and is not this ſweet? Poor Saint, here thou complaineſt, that *God is a Stranger to thee, and as a way-faring Man, that turneth aſide to tarry but for a Night.* Thou haſt only now and then a ſhort viſi from him, *Jer.* 14. 8. Thou complaineſt that *thy Beloved withdraws himſelf, and is gone,* Cant. 5. 6. Thou complaineſt that *the Comforter that ſhould reliеve thy Soul is far from thee,* Lam. 1.18. Thou complaineſt of many ſad and woful diſtances from God, and of the lowlineſs of thy Communion, and well thou mayeſt! For indeed, how little a portion is there here ſeen, or enjoyed of him by thee? Well but when Death comes, that will lift thee above all thoſe Diſtances between God and thee, Chriſt and thee, and ſet thee down in the full, conſtant, and immediate Viſion and Fruition of him for ever; the thoughts of which made *Paul*, and others, to deſire to be gone, and to chuſe Death rather than Life, 2 Cor. 7.6,7,8. *We are confident* (ſays he) *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord, for we walk by Faith, not by ſight;*

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we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord. Pray obſerve, *Paul* enjoyed as much of God and Chriſt here, as moſt did; and yet all that Communion he enjoyed here, he accounted as no Communion to that which he ſhould enjoy after Death; while we are preſent *in the Body*, ſays he, that is, while we live in this World, *we are abſent from the Lord*, abſent from God and Chriſt; our Communion here is but Diſtance and Eſtrangement, ſo low and unconſtant is it, in compariſon of what we know we ſhall enjoy after Death: And therefore, ſays he, we had rather be abſent from the Body, we had rather be gone hence, and be preſent with the Lord. Death will bring us to another-gueſs Preſence and Enjoyment of God and Chriſt, than here we ſhall ever be able to reach unto. Alas! All we enjoy of God and Chriſt here, is but as an earneſt; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the Verſe foregoing: *He that hath wrought us for this ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given us the earneſt of the Spirit*: But when Death comes, we ſhall enjoy the full Inheritance: All we enjoy here is but as the Firſt-fruits, *we that have the Firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. but when Death comes, we ſhall have the full Vintage, full Incomes of Love, full Manifeſtations of Light, and Life, and Glory, *fullneſs of Joy and Pleaſure* in the Divine Preſence, *Pſalm* 16. 11. full embraces in Chriſt's Boſom, full views of his Face, full Viſions of his Glory, Death, when it

it comes, will bring us to the Beatifical Vi-
ſion, which is all Good and Happineſs in one;
Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee
God, Mat. 5. 8. They do ſee God now, they
ee him by Faith, and thoſe ſights of him are
weet, glorious, Soul-raviſhing and transform-
ng Sights: But after Death they ſhall have
ther ſights of him, ſuch ſights of him as will
even infinitely ſurpaſs all that ever they had,
r were capable of here. *Here they ſee him*
but through a glaſs darkly; that is, they have
but low, obſcure, mediate ſights of him; they
ſee and enjoy but little of him; but when
Death comes, *then they ſhall ſee him face to*
face, that is, fully, clearly, immediately,
1 *Cor.* 12. 12. The Sum is, as a learnd Man
gives it us, that, *in this Life we have but ſlow and*
ſlender Sights and Enjoyments of God, in Compa-
riſon of what we ſhall ſee, know, and enjoy of him
in eternal Life, Glaſ. Rhet. Here they ſee
but his back parts, as God ſaid to *Moſes*; but
when Death comes, they ſhall ſee his Face,
that is, his Glory: Here they ſee him but ne-
gatively, as it were what he is not; but then
they ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 *John* 3. 2. *We ſhall*
ſee him as he is, in all his glorious Excellencies
and Perfections. In ſhort, they ſhall then have
ſuch Sights and Enjoyments of God and Chriſt,
as ſhall eternally fill, delight, ſolace, ſatisfie,
and ſet at reſt their Souls for ever; ſuch Sights
and Enjoyments as ſhall ſo ſolace and ſatisfie
them, as that there ſhall be no room for the
leaſt tittle for *iota* of a deſire or ever; yea,
ſuch Sights and Enjoyments as ſhall ſo ſatisfie
them,

them, as to leave them under an utter impoſſibility of ever turning aſide from them to anything elſe, and ſo an eternal impoſſibility of Sinning. O how ſweet muſt this be! And indeed the Schoolmen, I find, and others from them, give this as one reaſon, why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable, becauſe the Sight and Enjoyment they have of God there, is ſo full and ſatisfying, as they cannot turn aſide to any thing elſe. O welcome Death that brings us to thoſe Sights, thoſe Enjoyments of God, the chief Good. Once more,

7. Death, when-ever it comes will bring you to, and ſet you down in the Enjoyment of an Eternal Sabbath: And Oh how ſweet is this! *There remaineth a Reſt* (the word is, *Sabbath*, *or Sabbatiſm*) *to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Ay, but when ſhall they enjoy it? why truly, when Death comes, that will enter them upon it immediately; upon the night of Death, dawns the Eternal Sabbath. True, the Saints enjoy a Sabbath here, and the Sabbath to them is the ſweeteſt and amiableſt day in all the Week; 'tis a day of Joy and holy Feaſting to their Souls; and O how many times do your Souls long for it! But alas theſe Sabbaths have an end; but the Sabbath Death will ſet them down in, will be an Eternal Sabbath, an Eternal Sabbath, wherein they ſhall be employed in the higheſt Acts of Worſhip and Adoration, even Love, Praiſe, Admiration and Hallelujahs for ever; wherein there will be no wearineſs, no faintneſs, wherein there ſhall be no Intermiſſion; no going

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to Duties and breaking off again, as here we do; but a whole Eternity ſhall be employed in Acts of Divine Worſhip and Adoration; wherein there ſhall be no Deadneſs, no Dullneſs, no Spiritual Indiſpoſitions, no unſuitablneſs in us to thoſe high and holy Exerciſes which this Sabbath will be fill'd with; but our Souls ſhall be perfectly ſuited to, and fitted for thoſe glorious Employs, wherein not a few only, and thoſe ſome Saints and ſome Sinners, ſome good, and ſome bad, ſhall joyn together in Acts of Worſhip; but an innumerable Company both of Saints and Angels, and all theſe perfect Holy, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23, 24. Oh how ſweet and glorious will this be? 'Tis a great Saying which I have read in a worthy Divine, *Sabbaths here are comfortable*, ſays he, *and we have taſted ſome ſweet, ſome comfort in ſome Sabbaths; but taſte all the comfort that ever you had in all the Sabbaths you have enjoyed here, and all will be nothing to the comforts and Sweetneſs of the Eternal Sabbath.* Alas the perpetual Sabbath that ſhall be hereafter, that will be the Accompliſhment of all theſe Sabbaths; how ſweet then muſt that be! O ye Saints of God lift up your Heads, Death will ſet you down in this Sabbath. How have ſome of us longed ſometimes for the coming of the Sabbath! And how have we grieved when it has been gone? Well, but when Death comes, that will bring you to a Sabbath that ſhall never end. 'Tis a ſweet Saying of *Auſtin*, *There* (ſays he, ſpeaking of

Heaven) *is the great Sabbath, that hath no Evening, no end, on which we ſhall reſt and behold, behold and love, love and praiſe for ever.* Oh bleſſed be God for this Sabbath: And bleſſed be God that Death when it comes, ſhall bring us to this Sabbath. Well then, fear not Death, dread not Death, but be found Diligent and Faithful in the uſe of the Helps preſcrib'd for the preparing of your Souls for it; and then it will greatly befriend you when ever it comes, and you may exult and rejoyce in it.

I ſhall now conclude, but I muſt beg all that read this plain Diſcourſe, deeply and frequently to conſider and contemplate theſe things.

1. Every day ſeriouſly conſider and contemplate the exceeding Worth of your Souls, and the great things they are capable of. 'Tis ſad to think what low Thoughts the moſt of Men have of their Souls; they are content to ſell their Souls, to loſe their Souls, to damn their Souls, and all for a Luſt, for a little of this World, a little carnal, ſenſual Pleaſure and Delight here, which is but for a moment. That rebuke which *Auſtin* gave one is due to the moſt: *How comes it to paſs*, ſays he, *that among all the good things, thou wilt let nothing be in an ill caſe, but thy Self, thy Soul?* Truly the moſt of Men are ſolicitous to have all well but their Souls; they will have it go well with their Bodies, their Names, their Eſtates, their Families, but their Souls they mind

mind not. But my Beloved, I beſeech you think deeply and frequently of the Worth of your Souls, and the concerns of them: O 'tis your Souls that is your principal part. Chriſt, who beſt knew the Worth of Souls, tells you that the whole World is nothing to one Soul, and that the gain of the one cannot recompence the loſs of the other, no not in the leaſt, *Mat.* 16. 26. And you know what a Price he was pleaſed to pay for Souls, even his own Blood, his precious Blood, Life and all, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. Beſides, there are two things which ſpeak the Soul to be a thing of unſpeakable Worth and Value: Its vaſt Capacity, and its abſolute Immortality. (1.) The Capacity of the Soul ſpeaks its Worth: O what great things is the Soul of Man capable of! There is a kind of Infiniteneſs, as a worthy Divine obſerves, in the Soul of Man; 'tis capable of even an infinite Happineſs, or an infinite Miſery; 'tis capable of eternal Life, or eternal Death; 'tis capable of unconceivable Communications both of Love and Wrath, and muſt one day be fill'd with the one or the other of them; 'tis capable of knowing God, or bearing his Image, of enjoying Glorious Communion with him, yea of living God's own Life, and in a Participation of his own Bleſſedneſs: Look whatever the Angels enjoy, look whatever the Humane Soul of Chriſt enjoys, that the Soul is capable of the enjoyment of: A Sinner, O how precious does this ſpeak it

to be! And how great ſhould thy Concern be for it while day and ſeaſon laſts! Contemplate it therefore a little, and ſay, O how precious is my Soul, and what great things is it capable of! And it being ſo why do I take up in ſuch low, poor, dungy, dreſſie things, as the beſt of Sin, and this World are? Secondly, the Immortality of the Soul argues its Worth. The Soul never dies: It is indeed but as it were a Spark, a Beam of God's own Immortality breathed into the Body; at leaſt there is a ſtamp and impreſs thereof upon it: The Body, that dies, that returns to Duſt; but the Soul, that lives, that goes to God, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. As the Mortality of the Body, as the learned Man obſerves; ſo the Immortality of the Soul is here aſſerted. Beſides, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with the reſt of the good old Patriarchs, and the Servants of God who died long ſince, are notwithſtanding living ſtill; ſo Chriſt argues you know *Matt.* 22. 32. that is, their Souls live, as indeed do the Souls of all that are gone hence; their Souls will live either in Happineſs or Miſery, with God or Devils; and ſo muſt thine and mine, Sinner. When our Bodies ſhall be eaten by the Worms, our Souls will live either in Heaven or Hell. O think of this, daily contemplate and ſay, I have a Soul within me that muſt live for ever, and that as filled with even an infinite Happineſs or Miſery; I have a Soul within me

me that is capable of unſpeakable Joys, or unconceivable Torments, and in the one or the other it will, it muſt live for ever: Why then am I not more concerned for it?

2. Seriouſly contemplate, and daily keep your Spirits on the Thoughts of the wonderful Weight and Importance of Eternity, the greateſt of the Concern of the other World. O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt, great, boundleſs Eternity! How ſhall I do to ſpeak of thee? How are my Thoughts loſt, and my Spirits overwhelmed, when I ſet my ſelf to contemplate, how great, how weighty a thing thou art? An endleſs, boundleſs, bottomleſs State; a State that admits of neither Change, Pauſe, nor Period for ever. A State of unconceivable Happineſs or Miſery: Happineſs in the Enjoyment, or Miſery in the Loſs of, and baniſhment from God and Chriſt for ever, Happineſs is the Fruition of Infinite Love, or Miſery in the Revelation of Infinite Wrath, one of which every Soul muſt be the Object of for ever. Eternity! ſuch is the weight of it in it ſelf, that indeed we know not how to conceive of it: Every thing but Eternity has an end at laſt: So innumerable as the Stars of Heaven are, yet there is a laſt Star, and the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it. So innumerable as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore are, yet there is a laſt Sand,

and the number of them has an end, could we reach to it: So numerous as the Piles of Grass which are now, and from the Creation of the World have been, and to the end of the World shall be, are, yet there is an end of the number of them, could we reach it; there is a last Pile, a last Spire of Grass: So innumerable as the grains of Corn, in all the Harvests that ever were or shall be, are, yet the number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it, and there is a last grain: So innumerable as all the drops of Rain that ever did fall, or shall fall upon the Earth, from the Creation to the end of the World, are, yet still there is a last drop, yea, and that though all the drops contained in the wide and deep Sea be added thereunto: So innumerable as the Children of Men have been, are, and shall be, to the end of all things: So innumerable as all the Hairs of the Head of them all have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Thoughts of the Hearts of all throughout all Ages have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Brutes and Animals, which both the Earth and the Sea have brought forth, do and will bring forth, are and will be, yet still the number of them has an end, could we reach it; and there is a last Man, a last Hair, a last Thought, a last Animal: Should all the Vast Body of the Heavens, which our Eyes behold, be full written with Figures

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by the Hand of an Angel; yet the number of thoſe Figures would have an end, and there would be a laſt Figure: But as for Eternity, that has no end, no laſt. Could all thoſe vaſt numbers prementioned be put together into one, who could in the leaſt conceive of the thouſand thouſand part of it? Yet all this were nothing to Eternity, no not a thouſand thouſand part of it. Thus Eternity is unconceivably weighty in it ſelf, and 'tis Eternity indeed that puts weight into all other things: 'Tis Eternity that puts weight into the future Judgment. What were that Judgment, but that 'tis eternal Judgment? *Heb.* 6. 2. 'Tis Eternity that puts weight indeed into the Happineſs and Joys of Heaven: What were that Happineſs and thoſe Joys, were they not Eternal? Hence 'tis called *Eternal Life, Eternal Glory, a never-fading Crown, an everlaſting Kingdom, Joy and Pleaſure for evermore.* So (you know) the Scripture ſpeaks of it, as that which is its Crown and Perfection; hence we read of *being for ever with the Lord,* 1 Theſſ. 4. 17. to be with the Lord is ſweet: *Peter* found it ſo; all the Saints in their meaſure find it ſo here. But to be with the Lord (for ever) that makes it infinitely Sweet indeed: Thus and thus (for ever) in the Boſom of my Father's Love, and there (for ever) in the views of my Redeemer s Glory, and there (for ever) joyned within an innumerable Company of Angels, in loving,

praiſing, admiring, adoring, and ſinging Halle lujahs to God and the Lamb; and this (for ever) to be fully ſwallowed up in the Divine Life, the Divine Will, the Divine Preſence the Divine Fulneſs, and this (for ever) to be ſet above all Sin, to be delivered from an unavoidable neceſſity of Sinning, to an abſolute Impoſſibility of Sinning, and this (for ever. O how Sweet, how Glorious is this! This one word, *Eternity*, or *for ever*, is that which puts great Sweetneſs into it. Again, 'tis Eternity that indeed puts weight into the Miſeries and Torments of the Damned: What were the Fire of Hell, were it not unquenchable Fire? What were the Worm there, were it not a never-dying Worm? When the Scripture would ſpeak of the exceeding Greatneſs and Severity of thoſe Torments, (you know) 'tis in his Language, *There the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never quenched*, Mark 9. 44. Their Miſeries and Torments are eternal; and indeed Hell would be no Hell, in compariſon, had it not Eternity in it. Moſt weighty is the Meditation which I have read in a learned and holy Man to this purpoſe: *O Eternity! Eternity! O never-ending Eternity! O Eternity that can be meaſured by no ſpace of time, that can be perceived or apprehended by no humane Intellect or Underſtanding! How unconceiveably doſt thou augment the Torments of the Damned!* And but a few Lines after he again cries out, *O Eternity! Eternity! Thou, and thou alone doſt*

doſt aggravate the Torments, the Puniſhments of the Damned, beyond all meaſure. Heavy is the Puniſhment of the Damned, becauſe of its Sharpneſs, its Extenſiveneſs, its Univerſality, there being all Plagues and Puniſhments in it; but ſays he, 'tis moſt heavy, becauſe of its Eternity. Oh 'tis this indeed that makes it intolerably great and heavy. Oh not only to ~~be~~ baniſhed from God and Chriſt, to be driven from the Beatifical Viſion, but to be baniſhed and driven from hence for ever. Oh doleful, to be in the Flames, to ſuffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to be ſinning, and always bearing the Puniſhment of Sin, and all this (for ever.) O this makes it out of meaſure heavy, thus, and always thus, under the Wrath of God, and for ever ſo! This puts weight into ito it. Thus you ſee a little of the weight of Eternity. O contemplate it daily.

3. Conſider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miſcarry for ever; and on the other hand, what a wide door of Mercy there is open to you, and the fair opportunity you have of making a bleſſed Proviſion for your Souls and Eternity.

1. Conſider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miſcarry for ever, to periſh eternally; the more worth there is in the Soul, and the greater weight there is in Eternity, the more doleful it will be to periſh or miſcarry: As to the Intereſt of them to miſcarry in our Eſtate, in our Trade,

in our Name, in the change of our Condition in this World, or the like, this is ſad, and ſinks many; but Oh what is this to the miſcarriage of the Soul for ever! What is this to miſerable Eternity, to the loſs of God, of Chriſt, of the Comforter, of Heaven, and eternal Life? What is this to the Wrath of God, to the Vengeance of eternal Fire, to utter Darkneſs, to blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever? O Sirs, to have Infiniteneſs and Eternity combine againſt you to make you miſerable, and to be for ever as miſerable as Infiniteneſs and Eternity can make you, (as aſſuredly you will, in caſe you neglect to make proviſion for your Souls, and the future Life.) O how dreadful, how Doleful will this be! And what bitter Lamentations will it fill you with for ever! Did *Eſau* weep when he had loſt his Birth-right; and did *Lyſimachus* upbraid himſelf, and bewail his Folly, for parting with his Kingdom for a draught of Water? O then how will you weep and wail, and even tear and torment your ſelves for ever for your Sin and folly, when you ſhall find, that for a little of this World, for the ſatisfaction of a Luſt, for a few dreggy droſſie Pleaſures, and ſenſual Delights, or perhaps through a meer ſloth of Spirit, you have loſt your Souls, and have plunged your ſelves into an infinite Ocean of eternal Woe and Miſery, whence there is no Redemption for ever for you! Pray lay that Scripture to Heart now, *Luke* 13. 27, 28. *Depart from me*, ſays Chriſt, *all*

all ye Workers of Iniquity. Depart, here is the Doom that will paſs at laſt upon every unrepenting, unbelieving Sinner, every Soul that makes not ready for a Dying Hour: Well, and what then? *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you thruſt out.* O Sirs, when you ſhall ſee ſuch and ſuch lodged ſafe in Heaven, in the Boſom of Chriſt, and your ſelves ſhut out; and not only ſo, but caſt into utter Darkneſs, as you have it added, *Mat.* 18.12. When you ſhall ſee your ſelves ſhut up in the infernal Pit, and there ſealed up under God's Eternal Wrath; O then you will weep and gnaſh your Teeth indeed; then your own Conſcience will be eternally a ſecond Hell to you, tearing and tormenting your Souls in the remembrance of your Sin and Folly, in neglecting to prepare for, and make ſure of a better State. Think of theſe things e're it be too late.

2. Conſider and contemplate what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and what a fair opportunity God gives you, to make a bleſſed proviſion for your Souls and Eternity: What ſhall I ſay? Why Sirs, the way of Salvation is made plain to you, and you are daily called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; the great King of Heaven invites you to come and partake of this Goſpel-Feaſt; by one and another Servant of his which he ſends to you, he

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lets you know that all things are ready, all that your Souls can need to make them happy for ever; Chriſt is ready, and in him Life is ready, Grace is ready, Peace is ready, Pardon is ready, a compleat Righteouſneſs, or your Juſtification and Acceptation with God is ready, Heaven is ready Salvation is ready, and withal he bids you come, yea, he earneſtly importunes and ſolicits you to come and feaſt your Souls upon theſe things; he freely and frequently offers himſelf and all to you; intreating your acceptance: Yea more, he opens the Arms of his Love to you, aſſuring you of moſt cordial Welcome, and ready Reception notwithſtanding all your Sins and Miſcarriages. *Him that cometh unto me, I will by no means caſt out*, John 6. 37. Let him be who and what he will, a young or an old Sinner, a ſmall or a great Sinner, a Sinner that hath ſtood it out againſt me a little or a long time, I will not caſt him out, my Grace is free, my Fulneſs is large and ſufficient, my Blood is precious, and this has an infinite Vertue in it: My Spirit is powerful and efficacious; I am every way mighty to ſave, able to *ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by me*; Yea, 'tis my Work and Buſineſs to ſave; my Father ſeal'd and ſent me for that end, and for that end came I into the World, and there did and ſuffered ſuch things as I did; and I may not, I will not caſt off any poor Soul that will come

and

and partake of Me and my Fullneſs, and that would fain be helped on towards Life and Bleſſedneſs. This is really the Language of Chriſt to poor Sinners; yea more, he ſends his Spirit to enlighten, to convince, to perſwade, to draw and allure them, and he does move in them, and ſtrive with them: O what a wide Door of Mercy is there here open to you, Sirs! And how fair is your opportunity of preparing for, and making ſure of a bleſſed Eternity? O accordingly as you love your Souls, and would live for ever, come into Chriſt, come and apply and improve him in a way of believing, for the good of your eternal Souls; in his ſtrength ſet upon repenting: believing, work the work of your Souls and Eternity; and your day being ſo bright, as indeed it is, O labour to know the things of your Peace in your day! Leſt neglecting them, Chriſt ſpeedily ſay of you, as once with Tears in his Eyes he did of neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known in thy day the things which belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes* ---- I have done: I'll cloſe all with that holy wiſh for you, my dear Congregation, and my ſelf, that *Auſtin* was wont to make for himſelf, and his People, namely, *That as they had been often crowded together to worſhip God in that Earthly Temple wherein he preached, ſo they might eternally live together in the Heavenly Temple above*: So

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my wiſh and deſire is, That we my Beloved you and I, who have often been throng'd and crouded together in an earthly Houſe, may live together eternally, and eternally adore God together in our Father's Houſe above: And if we ſhall never preach, and pray, hear and ſing together more on Earth, (as I am apt to think we ſhall not) yet that we may praiſe, love, and admire God, and ſing Hallelujahs to him for ever together in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*

Mr. *Pearſe*'s laſt Letter to his Flock.

To my dearly beloved Friends, that ſmall Company, to whom, by the Providence of God, I have ſome years laſt paſt preached the Everlaſting Goſpel.

Dearly and longed for in our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; Grace, Mercy, and Peace unto you from God our Father, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the eternal Spirit.

IT *is now many Years ſince, by the Providence of God, we have been called to worſhip his great and Reverend Name together; during which time*

time God hath been exceeding good to us, manifeſting his Power in our weakneſs, and his Love in our unworthineſs. He hath declared his Name to be recorded amongſt us, by his coming to us, and Bleſſing of us: Some of you have been Convinced, ſome Converted, ſome Edified, and all (I hope) quickned and encouraged Heavenwards: And not only your ſelves, but, through the Grace of God, many others have been born to Chriſt amongſt us, and more built up in the Holy Faith. O the many, warm, ſweet and refreſhing Sabbaths we have enjoyed together! And what ſhall we ſay to theſe things, or what ſhall we do? O, let us bow down at the foot of God, and adore his infinitely, infinitely, infinitely, free, rich, and powerful Grace, aſcribing all the Glory to that alone, to which (I am ſure) all is due. God hath now called me aſide from you, and not only from you, but he ſeems to be calling

pod ting me out of his Vineyard, yea, out weak- of this World: I have long had a ineſs weak and infirm Body, but now God e re- in his wiſe and holy Providence, hath ng to ſeen good to reduce me to a far lower you and weaker ſtate of Body, my Health rted, being now utterly broken: Yet I muſt uick- ſay, God is exceeding good to me, and rds: deals in fatherly tenderneſs with me; ough I have neither much Sickneſs, nor ave much Pain, only my Diſeaſe, accord- and ing to its name. gradually conſumes O me, nor am I without ſome lucid In- eſh- tervals: God both lifts me up, and ge- caſts me down, (as he dealt with the eſe Church of old;) Sometimes I am un- let der ſome Revivings, which ſeem to nd give hopes of a return from the Grave; ly, Anon nothing but Death ſeems to be in ib- view; And in this dubious ſtate I am ch waiting upon the Will of God, which th, (I am ſure) is Holy, Wiſe, and ot Good, and which (I hope) ſhall be l- welcome to me, whether it be for Life g

or

or Death: Hitherto through Grace Death hath not been terrible to me what it may be, in its neareſt approaches I cannot tell; but I look to and reſt upon him, who hath deſtroyed both Death, and him that had the power of Death.

And now only two things I beg of you: One is, That you all give me a room in your Prayers, while I am in the Land of the Living; and I deſire you would beg of God theſe things for me.

Firſt, that all Sin and Guilt cleaving to me, may be fully expiated and diſcharged through the Blood of Chriſt. O beg both Forgiveneſs and Repentance for me, which (God knows) I greatly need.

Secondly, That my Will may be throughly reſigned up into the Will of God, either for Life or Death.

Thirdly that I may have much of God's Preſence with me, and may always have

have good Thoughts of Him and his Diſpenſations towards me, in all He doth, or ſhall lay upon me.

Fourthly, That if God ſhould pleaſe to reſtore me, I may come out of this Furnace purified and refined, as Gold that is tried ſeven times, and more fitted for my Maſters Service: Or if his pleaſure is, (which ſeems at preſent moſt probable) to put a period to my mortal Life, that his Love, and the Light of his Countenance may ſhine upon me to ſweeten the bitter pangs of Death to me; we cannot live comfortably without his Love, much leſs can we die comfortably without it. That is my firſt requeſt. The other is, That you will accept and embrace ſome plain, but weighty Counſels. God is my Record, that my hearts deſire and Prayers for you is and has been, that you may be ſaved, and in love to your Salvation I leave theſe Directions with you.

1. Above

1. *Above all things look well to, and labour to make ſure of an Union with Chriſt, knowing aſſuredly that without Union with him, all your Religion is vain and ineffectual.*

2. *Take heed of too much addictedneſs to this World, as remembring, that if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him: And that the friendſhip of this World is enmity to God.*

3. *Dwell much within, and be much converſant in Heart-work, in ſtudying the Heart, ſearching the Heart, cleanſing the Heart, keeping the Heart, looking always upon it as the verieſt Cheat and Impoſtor in the World, deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked.*

4. *Take heed of ſplitting upon that fatal Rock of ſelf-deceit, of which you have ſometimes heard, and upon which the greateſt part of Profeſſors ſplit and periſh for ever.*

5. *Set*

5 *Set up and keep up the Worſhip of God both in your Families and Cloſets: for the Lord's ſake let none of yours be Prayerleſs Families.*

6. *Always maintain a great Honour and Reverence for all God's Ordinances, and in an eſpecial manner Honour and Sanctifie his Sabbath: The Sabbath day is your Souls Market-day: O loſe not your Market.*

7. *Be univerſally honeſt and upright in your Callings, and your Dealings in them; the fraudulent dealings of Profeſſors do much reproach the Goſpel.*

8. *Covet to ſeat your ſelves under a ſound, clear, ſearching Goſpel Miniſtry, and keep mainly to the ſame Miniſtery; and the Lord guide you therein.*

9. *Labour that your profiting under the Miniſtry may appear unto all Men: It will be a dreadful thing to enjoy rich means, and bring forth no Fruit to Per-*

Perfection: O Sirs be fruitful Chriſtians.

10. *Expect further Trials and Sufferings, and prepare for them: There is a dark and gloomy day coming, ſuch as (I am apt to think) you and I have never ſeen any like unto it, and ſuch a wherein (poſſibly) you will think it beſt with them that* God *ſhall have hid in the Grave before-hand: But be not troubled, it will be ſhort; and a glorious Day will follow, a Day wherein the Church of God ſhall ſing the Song of* Moſes *and of the Lamb, a Day wherein our dear Lord and Head ſhall reign glorioufly: And therefore,*

11. *Pray and long, long and pray much and earneſtly for the coming of the Day of* God, *for the coming of Chriſt's Kingdom:* Thy Kingdom come, *is a Petition ſhould be much upon our Hearts. O do not Reſt in low things, as to Divine Appearances and Manifeſtations both in the World and*

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in your own Souls. These Counsels I leave with you, out of that entire love and affection I bear to your Salvation, and our Lord's Honour as concerned in you. I will conclude all with that solemn and cordial Profession to you, which Augustine *often made to those to whom he was wont to preach,* viz. *That it is the desire of my Soul, that as we have been often crowded together to worship God in one Earthly House or Temple, so we may all worship him together for ever in the Heavenly House or Temple; And if we must never Pray, and Preach, and Hear, and Mourn together more on Earth, yet we may Love, and Sing, and Praise, and Admire, and Rejoyce together for ever in Heaven: Which that we may do, the God of Peace, (who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant) make us perfect in every good Work to*

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do his Will, working in you and m
that which is well-pleaſing in his ſigh
through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be Glo
for ever and ever. Amen and Amen

My dear Friends, I am your weak an
languiſhing, but yet cordial Friend
and willing Servant, in Chriſt, an
for Chriſt,

Edward Pearſe

FINIS.